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THE
HISTORY
OF
WOMEN,
FROM THE
EARLIEST ANTIQUITY,
TO THE
PRESENT TIME;

GIVING

Some Account of almost every interesting Particular concerning that Sex, among all Nations, ancient and modern.

The THIRD EDITION,
With many Alterations and Corrections:

By WILLIAM ALEXANDER, M. D.

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C O N T E N T S

OF THE

F I R S T V O L U M E.

INTRODUCTION. Page 1.

C H A P. I.

*A short Sketch of the Antediluvian History
of Women.* 27

C H A P. II.

Of Female Education. 35

C H A P. III.

*Of the Employments and Amusements of
Women.* 89

C H A P. IV.

The same Subject continued. 114

C H A P. V.

*Of the Treatment, Condition, Advantages,
and Disadvantages of Women, in savage
and civil Life,* 150

C O N T E N T S.

C H A P. VI.

The same Subject continued. 189

C H A P. VII.

The same Subject continued. 218

C H A P. VIII.

The same Subject continued. 255

C H A P. IX.

The same Subject continued. 300

C H A P. X.

Of the Character and Conduct of Women. 332

C H A P. XI.

The same Subject continued. 360

C H A P. XII.

The same Subject continued. 390

C H A P. XIII.

The same Subject continued. 439

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Influence of Female Society. 475

C H A P. XV.

Sketches of Ceremonies and Customs, for the most part observed only by Women. 507

. The Reader is requested to correct the following

E R R A T A.

Page 8 line 26, *after plundered, read for.*

- 22 - 6, *for amidst read amidst.*
- 52 - 24, *for Grece read Greece.*
- 205 - 1, *for Roman read Romans.*
- 223 - 15, *dele they.*
- 261 - 12, *for tasks read a task.*
- 276 - 8, *for has read as.*
- 343 - 1, *for carry read carrying.*
- 358 - 13, *for MODETSY read MODESTY.*
- 437 - 21, *after immense read loads of.*
- 438 - 9, *for gursuit read pursuit.*
- 486 - 15, *for do England read do in England.*
- 496 - 18, *for have read has.*

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH there is nothing in nature that so much engages our attention, or so forcibly draws our inclinations, as the other sex, yet so strong is our partiality to ourselves, that we have never in any period, nor in any country, sufficiently attended to the happiness and interest of those beings, whom in every period, and in every country, we have professed to love and to adore: And while the charms which they possess, have every where extorted from us the tribute of love, they have only in a few places so far softened the ferocity of our nature, as to obtain from us good usage.

ALMOST every man is full of complaints against the sex, but we rarely meet with any one who seriously endeavours to rectify the evils against which he exclaims so loudly. He who considers women only as objects

Com-
plaints a-
gainst the
sex.

of his love, and pleasure; complains, that in his connections with them, they are inconstant, unfaithful, and ever open to flattery and seduction. The philosopher, who would wish to mingle the joys of friendship and of conversation with those of love, complains that the sex are destitute of every idea, but such as flow from gallantry and self-admiration; and consequently incapable of giving or receiving any of the more refined and intellectual pleasures. The man of business complains, that they are giddy and thoughtless, and want the plodding head, and the saving hand, so necessary towards thriving in the world. And almost every man complains, of their idleness, extravagance, disregard to admonition, and neglect of the duties of domestic and social life.

Causes of
these com-
plaints.

WITHOUT examining how far these complaints are well or ill founded, we shall only observe, that in cases where they are well founded, when we trace them to their source, we generally find that source to be ourselves. Does not the man of love and gallantry, commonly set the example of inconstancy, to the females with whom he is connected? And do not men in general,
but.

but too obviously, chalk out to the other sex, the way that leads to every levity and folly? What made the philosopher so susceptible of the intellectual pleasures? doubtless, the education bestowed upon him; and the same education might have given his wife or his daughter, an equal, or even a superior relish for them: It is folly in him therefore to expect the fruit without the culture necessary to bring it to perfection. The plodding and steadiness of the man of business, he has acquired in his early years; and they are augmented by his being sole master of what he can amass, and having a power to spend or dispose of it as he thinks proper. But his wife was brought up in no such school, and has no such motives to industry; for, should she toil with the utmost assiduity, she can not appropriate to herself what she acquires; nor even expend any part of it without leave of her husband. Nor is the idleness, extravagance, and neglect of domestic duties, with which we charge the sex, so much the fault of nature as of education. Can we expect that the girl whom we train up in every fashionable levity and folly, whom we use our utmost efforts to flatter and to amuse, shall, the

INTRODUCTION

moment of her marriage, totally change her plan, and become the sober and economical housewife? As well may we sow tares and expect to reap wheat.

If this be, as we persuade ourselves it is, a candid and impartial state of the source of female folly and weakness; if these evils may be traced either to the total want of, or to an improper education; and if the power of withholding or bestowing this education, be lodged in our hands, as having the sole management and direction of the sex; then it will follow, that we should act a much better and more becoming part, in trying to amend their faults by more judicious instructions, than to leave them ignorant, and complain that they are so; or teach them folly, and rail at them for having learned what we taught them. But instead of doing this, in every age, and in every country, while the men have been partial to the persons of the fair, they have either left their minds altogether without culture, or biased them by a culture of a spurious and improper nature; suspicious, perhaps, that a more rational one would have opened their eyes, shewn them their real condition, and prompted

INTRODUCTION.

ted them to assert the rights of nature; rights, of which the men have perpetually, more or less, deprived them.

WE not only either neglect the sex, or mislead them in point of education; but while youth and beauty are on their side; the scene we open to them is all flattery and delusion. While we take every opportunity of telling them, when present, that their persons are handsome and elegant, that their sentiments and actions are all perfection; when absent, we laugh at their credulity, and spleenetically satirise and exhibit to view all their faults and follies. Nor is it till they have become wives, or till the wrinkles have furrowed their brows, that the voice of truth or of plain dealing reaches their ears, from any of our sex, who are not connected to them by ties more sacred than those of gallantry and politeness.

NOR are the follies and foibles of the sex, subjected only to verbal sneer, and to verbal criticism; men who have been soured by disappointments of any kind, and more particularly those who have been unfortunate in the pursuit of lawful, or even of unlawful love;

Satirists,
how they
have
treated
the sex.

love; have in all ages dipped their pens in gall, and for the supposed faults of a few, illiberally vomited out spleen and ill-nature against the whole sex. Among the earliest of these kind of writers we may justly reckon Solomon, who, fated with licentious love, cloyed with venal charms, and perhaps shattered in constitution, took almost every opportunity to exclaim against the fair slaves of his seraglio, and the whole sex; because they could afford him no new pleasure, and because they were not equal in mental qualifications to the men. A circumstance which Solomon might easily have found to be impossible, had he attended to their education and their confinement. Some also of the Apocryphal writers are nothing behind Solomon in spleen, and greatly exceed him in ill-nature and coarseness of expression. But it seems to have been the genius of the East to praise all women for their personal graces, and at the same time to suppose them entirely divested of every good quality of the mind; for we find the same ideas which were entertained by Solomon, diffused among the Hindoos perhaps in an earlier period of the world, and venting themselves also in their sacred writings, even with an additional degree

gree of acrimony. “The lust of a woman
 “(say the Pundits) is never satisfied, no
 “more than fire is satisfied with fuel, or the
 “main ocean with receiving the rivers, or
 “the empire of death with the dying of
 “men and animals.” And again, “Wo-
 “men have six qualities: the first, an inor-
 “dinate desire for jewels and fine furniture,
 “handsome clothes, and nice victuals; the
 “second, immoderate lust; the third, violent
 “anger; the fourth, deep resentment, no
 “person knowing the sentiments concealed
 “in their heart; the fifth, another person’s
 “good appears evil in their eyes; the sixth,
 “they commit bad actions.” With such
 invectives of the easterns we could fill a
 whole volume; but we have only selected
 these, to shew that they were mere effusions
 of the spleen, neither supported by argu-
 ment nor seasoned with wit. Nor were the
 Greek and Roman writers more refined in
 their sentiments, or delicate in their expres-
 sions. The language used by some of the
 Greek writers, as well as by Juvenal, Mar-
 tial, and Horace, is in many places too
 coarse and indecent for a people just emer-
 ging from barbarity, and conveys to us a
 mean idea of Greek and Roman politeness.

AFTER

Favourable turn in the condition of the sex.

AFTER women had been more than three thousand years, the subject upon which satirists had discharged their wit, and splenetics their ill-humour, an institution arose in Europe, known by the name of chivalry, which for some time totally changed the sentiments and writings of mankind, and placing the sex hardly beneath celestial beings, made it something more than treason to maltreat, and scarcely less than blasphemy to speak evil of them. The times, however, in which chivalry flourished in its greatest perfection, being clouded with ignorance, did not give birth to many literary productions, but as soon as letters began to mix with gallantry, the men, instead of striving against each other who should most vilify the sex, entered the lists with an intention of shewing their superior merit, and even of persuading the world, that of all the joys we can experience in the present, or hope for in the life to come, love is the only one worth our care and solicitude.

ANCIENTLY the bards had only been employed to sing the exploits of the heroes who plundered, or of the rich who entertained them in their train. In the decline of chivalry, they began also to sing the praises of
of

of beauty, and the extacies of love. In the praise of beauty they were to the last degree extravagant and hyperbolical. Not satisfied with comparing their mistresses to angels and other inferior celestial beings, they were not ashamed to compare them to, and even to exalt them above the Supreme Being himself. In celebrating the enjoyment of love, they were not less wild and romantic, and imagined that even paradise without it would be joyless and insipid. Boccace, in the most serious manner, classed together God and the ladies, and thanked them for their mutual assistance in defending him against his enemies; and Petrarch, no less seriously, compares Laura, his mistress, to Jesus Christ. Deudes de Prade, a priest and poet, who used to sing the praises of women, says, that he would not wish to enter into heaven, but on condition of making love to her whom he adored.

We are not much surprised to find the poets, or troubadours, who were retained and paid by the rich and the beautiful, flattering greatness and extolling beauty. But they were not the only set of men who thus employed themselves: the humour became general;

To praise the sex became fashionable.

INTRODUCTION.

Poets, Priests, Gentlemen, all dedicated their literary talents to the praise of women; and it became at last unnecessary for the sex to hire poets, when all ranks of people voluntarily enlisted themselves in their service.

BOCCACE seems to have been the first who started the idea of writing any thing larger than a song or sonnet in praise of the sex. He published a Latin treatise, intitled "*Of illustrious Women;*" and in search of them he ransacked the whole circuit of fable, of the sacred, and of the Greek and Roman histories. The idea was too happily adapted to the taste of the times, to languish by disuse, or sink into oblivion; it was soon, therefore, taken up by a numerous herd of imitators. Francis Sordonati improving upon it, collected from every polished and from every barbarous nation to the number of one hundred and twenty, the names of such women as had escaped Boccace. This mode of writing now became fashionable. In a few years, not less than twenty authors had published in praise of women. The heroine, the religiosa, and the learned, stood first in the catalogue. But the inferior virtues did not pass unnoticed; and at last,
even

even the making of an excellent pudding, and every other species of culinary merit, became the subject of panegyric: and in spite of all their natural phlegm, even the Dutch felt the enthusiasm, and contributed their mite to the praise of the sex.

SUBJECTS of writing upon, like modes of dress, have their turns of being fashionable: this was the period in which the fashionable topic was to extol all the virtues, and to varnish over all the vices of the sex. Much had already been said and wrote in this adulatory strain: but Hilario da Costa, a monk, resolving to exceed all who had gone before him, published two quarto volumes, of eight hundred pages each; containing, according to his account, the panegyrics of all the women of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who had distinguished themselves by any remarkable talents or virtues. But as if no valuable talent, nor any virtue could exist without the pale of the catholic church, the partial ecclesiastic passed in silence over every woman of other principles; and while he loudly praised the virtues of Mary queen of England, whose memory succeeding ages have held in contempt;

tempt; of her sister Elizabeth, whom her country still remembers with gratitude, he made no mention. The eulogies of this monk amount to one hundred and seventy. But who, in this delusory world, can ensure to himself the summit of greatness or of fame? The voluminous labours of our monk were soon after greatly surpassed by Paul de Ribera, who was delivered of a monstrous work, which he called "*The Triumphs and heroic Enterprizes of Eight Hundred Women,*"

ON reading these accounts, an idea naturally arises, that the women of those times must either have been remarkable for their virtues and good qualities, or the men must have basely prostituted their talents to adulation and flattery. The truth seems to be, that both were in some measure the case. The subject, as we have just now remarked, was fashionable. It intitled the writer to the smiles and approbation of the fair; and their smiles and approbation, besides flattering his vanity, were the road to honour and preferment. Nor was the spirit of chivalry yet so far evaporated, as to leave the men at liberty to consider the sex in a calm and dispassionate

dispassionate light, or to write any thing concerning them, that did not set them above the level of mortality. The women too, emulous of glory and of praise, were, by these writings, stimulated to great and virtuous actions. They inspired the men to ascribe to them noble deeds and sentiments, and they acted and thought nobly, that they might not falsify the inspirations they had given birth to. Hence these times produced more extraordinary women, than have ever at any other period appeared in Europe.

WHEN this kind of gallantry, which taught every man to consider every woman as a kind of superior being, had evaporated in extravagant exertions, the minds of men took an opposite direction, they began to consider the sex in a diminutive and contemptuous light; looking upon them, either as the play-things of a sportive hour, or the mere instruments of animal pleasure; divesting them of almost all sentiment, and avoiding almost all serious connection with them. In England, the libertinism of the court of Charles the Second, first debauched the morals of the women, and then taught the

The sentiments of the men take an opposite direction.

the men to despise them for the want of what they themselves had robbed them of. Things having taken this turn, it soon became as fashionable to write against the sex, as it had been before to write in their favour. The earl of Rochester set the example, and it was soon followed by Pope, Swift, Young, and a variety of other inferior scribes; all of whom assert, that their intention was thereby to reclaim a sex, which, in prosecution of vice and folly, had resisted every other effort. But if such really was their intention, the event has shewn how ill it was adapted to the purposes intended. The praises bestowed on women in former times, fired them with a great and a virtuous emulation; the satire thrown out against them by the writers we have mentioned, only excited their indignation, but did not amend their heart.

SUCH have been the modes of writing concerning the sex, and such have been the effects of these writings. Let us now take a short view of the revolutions which have happened in the characters and manners of women, from the destruction of the Roman empire to the present time.

WHEN

WHEN the ancient Germans sallied from their woods and caverns, to give laws and customs to the rest of Europe, their women, we shall see afterward, were, in many respects, of equal, and sometimes even of greater, consideration and consequence than their men. When these Germans had settled themselves in their conquests, and when, from the mixture of religion, gallantry and war, for which they were conspicuous, had arisen that species of romantic heroism, called chivalry, the value which it stamped on their women, communicated to them a dignity and pride, which contributed to render them as virtuous as the women of any country or period have ever been.

BUT when chivalry began to degenerate, and when knighthood, the chief of its honours, instead of being eagerly courted, by a long series of valorous and meritorious actions, came to be annexed to the possession of a certain quantity of land; prostituted to every one who desired, and even to serve the purposes of the great; forcibly obtruded on those who sedulously avoided it. The public honour of the men began to decline. Their behaviour to the women became

Causes of this change of sentiment.

became less respectful. The women lost much of their dignity, and with it no small share of their virtue. The history of all the European nations, now exhibited a picture the most sadly reversed from what it was before. The men had lost all their deference for the sex, and the women had lost all the delicacy and chastity that inspired it. The coarsest familiarity of manners, and the most scandalous profligacy of character in both sexes ensued.

AMONG the French, instead of approaching the women with that respectful deference, which custom had instituted, and which modesty required, it now became fashionable for the men to intrude themselves upon them every where, with the most indecent familiarity. The sex might easily have discouraged this, but they rather gave it countenance; and the consequence was, that all sexual decorum being nearly extinguished, the familiarity to which they admitted the men, in time, began to be productive of contempt. The grossest debauchery succeeded the most sentimental love. Even the name of delicacy was almost lost. Women of all ranks and conditions, whether
they

they were dressed, or undressed, in bed, or out of it, admitted their male visitors with equal indifference. Councils of state were frequently held in the bed-chambers of the ladies, who presided in bed, and determined by their voices, but more commonly by their secret favours, the resolutions that were taken.

NOR were the manners of the English ladies much more reserved, or their characters more sacred than those of the French. The same indecent familiarity marked their public, and the same licentiousness, their private, behaviour. During the Christmas holidays, almost every nobleman entertained his vassals of both sexes, a neighbouring clergyman was generally chosen, to preside over this riotous mirth and indecent festivity, who, from the nature of his office, was commonly called Abbot of Misrule. In the houses of the great, were apartments destined for the women, who were employed in embroidery, and other kinds of needlework; and the name given to these apartments, in consequence of the use that was made of them, came in time to be synonymous to that of a brothel. Nay, so lost to

public decency were all ranks of men, that even the clergy were not ashamed to have inscriptions over the doors of these apartments, signifying the use to which they were appropriated*. Nor did gentlemen of considerable property blush, to hold lands by, and bear commissions, for being marshals of the king's whores.

Female
delicacy
begins to
revive.

SOMETIME previous to the reign of queen Elizabeth, the sex began to recover that delicacy and decency which they had lost. From her time, to that of the Protector, their manners were still refining; but during his administration, the whole nation became sanctimoniously enthusiastic, devotion struggled hard to exclude nature, and slovenliness and superstition to substitute themselves for religion. The restoration changed again the manners of the people, and gave them a direction only to pleasure and licentious love. The distractions during the reign of James II., somewhat abated that fervour for pleasure; and the settled situation of affairs

* The celebrated Cardinal Wolsey, over a door of a particular part of his palace, had these words in Latin: "The house of the whores of my lord the Cardinal."

under

under William III., together with the disapprobation shewn by his court to unlawful gallantry, communicated to the female character that turn towards decency and politeness of manners, in which it has now made so considerable a progress. We cannot help taking notice here, that if we may credit the declaimer, the satirist, and the preacher, the female virtues are at present on the decline. For our parts, we pretend not to decide on so delicate a point; and only express our hopes, that the conduct of our fair country-women, will, in this particular, contribute to give the lie to the satirist, the declaimer, and even to the preacher himself.

WHILE the manners and the character of the European women have been held out in such a variety of different lights; while they have been liable to so many mutations, from the changes of fashion, of government, and religion; the women of the East have exhibited always the same appearance: their manners, customs, and fashions, unalterable, like their rocks, have stood the test of many revolving ages; though the kingdoms of their country have often changed masters; though they have submitted to the arms and

Of the eastern women.

the regulations of almost every invader; yet the laws by which their sex are governed and enslaved, have never been revised nor amended.

SUCH being the case, in taking an introductory view of the eastern women, we are, like the man, who, from an eminence surveying the surface of a placid ocean, looks out in vain for variety or diversity. The Hindoo women, who inhabit the banks of the Ganges and the Indus, have been time immemorial almost in every respect the same as at present: nor could even the introduction of the religion of Mahomet, which gave to those of the sex who professed it, no less an advantage over the disciples of Brama, than an exemption from burning on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands, ever induce one single Hindoo to become Mahometan, or change the invariable rites of Brama for those of the Arabian prophet.

As Asia was formerly the seat of learning, and is now that of ignorance, we are better acquainted with the ancient, than the modern ideas of the Asiatics concerning their women; and have already seen, that these
ideas,

ideas, besides being unfavourable, were often expressed in the most coarse and indelicate manner. Had the manners and customs of their women been subject to the same changes as they are in Europe, we might have expected the same changes in the sentiments and writings of their men: but as this is not the case, we have reason to presume, that the same sentiments entertained by Solomon, by some of the apocryphal writers, and by the ancient Pundits*, are the sentiments of this day: and in this opinion we are the more confirmed, when we consider, that, in the treatment of the sex, no alteration for the better has ever yet taken place.

BUT while such are the sentiments of the Asiatics, while such is the manner in which they treat their women, their tongues, in the utmost dissonance to these sentiments, constantly utter a language to which their hearts are entirely strangers, and the whole tenor of their actions flatly contradicts their words. While, in the absence of the sex, they seem to despise and treat them with contempt. In

* Pundits are the Braminical expositors of the laws of the Hindoos.

their

their presence, when instigated by animal love, they not only pay them the greatest deference, but even accost them as something more than mortal. When the love fit is over, though their tongues may still retain the same language, they will, amidst all this abuse and prostitution of words, chastise with severity for the slightest offence, her whom they seem to adore; will, without any offence whatever, keep her shut up a perpetual prisoner from the joys of society, and almost from the light of heaven; and, should jealousy arise in their breasts, consign her to expire in the most cruel tortures, while themselves glory and exult in her sufferings.

SUCH has been, from the remotest antiquity, the condition of the weaker sex; over the greater part of Asia and Africa; and such it will probably continue, as long as slavery shall debase the minds, and ignorance and superstition cloud the understandings of the people.

Of the
American
women.

WHEN Columbus discovered America, he opened a field for the ambition of the statesman, the avarice of the trader, and the contemplation of the philosopher. He found
that

that vast continent peopled by a race, or rather divers races of mortals, scarcely less distinct in their persons, than in their manners and customs, from those of the Old World; and, which, when compared to them, were only mere children in all the arts that render life comfortable, and distinguish man from the beasts of the field. Such were both sexes: the women were but little distinguished from the men by their dress, where any dress was made use of; nor were they much inferior to them in bodily strength, and hardly less patient of cold, hunger, or thirst, or less qualified to hunt and fish for their subsistence. But notwithstanding this natural equality, the men had completely enslaved them, and thrown upon their shoulders all that could be called labour, either in the house or in the field. Thus oppressed and neglected, the fair sex were entire strangers to the joys of friendship, and but little acquainted with those of love. They passed through life almost without tasting any of its pleasures, and could hardly be said to enjoy one privilege beside personal liberty.

BUT this was not the case in every part of America. Among some tribes, the women enjoyed

enjoyed almost the whole, and among others, a great share of the legislative authority: The condition of the sex was not, however, properly adjusted to any medium: they were every where either exalted to a degree far beyond the dictates of good policy, and vested with powers and privileges of the most exorbitant nature, or sunk to a level with the beasts, and depressed by the most abject slavery.

SUCH was the state in which they were found by the first discoverers of America; a state, from which it was natural to hope they would long ere this time have been rescued by European politeness and humanity. But our hopes are still disappointed. Our sordid love of their gold overcame our politeness, banished humanity from our breasts; and instead of abolishing the slavery of the women, made us with more than savage barbarity, wherever our power could reach, extend it to the men also.

IN the condition we have now described, had the women of America been for time immemorial: but as the Americans had not the art of writing, and consequently no
historical

historical records, we know not whether their states ever suffered any revolutions, or whether they ever altered or improved their manners and customs. It is pretended, indeed, that the Mexicans had a kind of historical records, composed of what they called Quipos, or Chords, so knotted and twisted, as to be able to relate the whole series of past events, with the same clearness and precision as our books: but the little that was ever learned concerning the ancient state of America, seems to demonstrate the falsity of this opinion.

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN.

CHAP. I.

*A Short Sketch of the Antediluvian History
of Women.*

BY the Mosaic history of the creation, CHAP.
I.
~~~~~ it appears, that the males and females of all the brute animals, were formed, not only of the same materials, and in the same manner, but also at the same time. When the sacred historian, however, describes the creation of the human genus; he informs us, that the female was distinguished from the male by being formed, not of the dust of the earth, as he was, but of a part of the body of the male himself\*. Those who

\* Various and ridiculous are the fables related by oriental writers, concerning the creation of the first pair. We shall only mention a few of these propagated by the Jewish Rabbies, whose ancient legends,

CHAP. I. have ascribed to the fair sex a superiority over ours, pretend, that from being thus formed of matter doubly refined, they derive their superior beauty and excellence.

NOT long after the creation, the deception of the first woman by the serpent, and the fatal consequences arising from that deception, furnish the most interesting story in the whole history of the sex\*. But as that story is already so well known, we shall pass over it in silence, and proceed to relate those few anecdotes of their antediluvian state, which Moses and some other ancient historians have handed down to us.

equal, if not surpass, in absurdity even those of more modern ages. -- God, say they, at first created Adam with a long tail; but afterward, on considering him attentively, he thought he would look better without it: resolving, however, not to lose any thing that he had made, he cut it off, and formed it into a woman: and hence the sex derive their low and inferior nature. Others of them tell us, that the first human being was created double, of both sexes, and joined side to side; that God improving on his original plan, separated the male from the female part, where they had been joined together, and made them into two distinct beings; and that from hence arose the perpetual inclination of the sexes to join themselves together again.

\* An ancient story says, that Eve not being able, for sometime, to make her husband partake of the forbidden fruit, at last broke down a branch from the tree of Knowledge, and making it into a cudgel, by that powerful argument soon prevailed on him to taste it.

CHAP.  
I.Cause of  
the dis-  
pute be-  
tween  
Cain and  
Abel.

IN the sacred history we are told, that when Cain and Abel, the two sons of Adam, brought their offerings to the Lord, the offering of Cain was rejected, and that of Abel accepted; a circumstance for which Moses does not assign any reason. If tradition, however, deserves any credit, an oriental tradition supplies this defect; and informs us, that Cain and Abel having each of them a twin sister, as soon as they all became marriageable, Adam proposed to them, that Cain should marry the twin sister of Abel, and Abel the twin sister of Cain; alleging as his reason for this proposal, that as their circumstances obliged them to marry their sisters, it was proper that they should marry those that were seemingly the least related to them. To this proposal Cain would not agree, and insisted on having his own twin sister, because she was fairer than the other. Adam, displeased at his disobedience, referred the dispute to the decision of the Lord; ordered his sons to bring each an offering before him; and told them, that the offering which had the preference, would be a declaration in favour of him who presented it. On the offerings being brought, and that of Abel accepted, Cain, stimulated by

**CHAP. I.** by jealousy and resentment, as soon as they came down from the Mount where they had been sacrificing, fell upon his brother and slew him. And thus a woman became the cause not only of the first quarrel, but of the first introduction of death,

Debauchery of the race of Cain.

**CAIN** and his posterity being, for this barbarous deed, exiled from the rest of the human race, began to abandon themselves to every species of wickedness\*; and it is supposed were in time, on that account, denominated Sons and Daughters of Men: while the posterity of Seth, under the care and tuition of Adam, having as remarkably distinguished themselves for virtue, and a regard to the divine precepts, in time also acquired the appellation of Sons and Daughters of God. This family of Seth, according to the oriental writers, fixed its habitation on the mountain where Adam their progenitor was buried; and from the

\* Some oriental writers, and fathers of the christian church, to account for this wickedness of Cain, have supposed that he was begot by the devil. Nor have they considered Adam as being more chaste than his wife; they tell us that he lived 130 years with another woman, named Lilith, who was formed out of the dust of the earth; and add, that the off-spring begot between them was dæmons.





sacred dust there deposited, called it the Holy Mountain: while Cain and his posterity inhabited the valley below†, and constantly rioted in every species of lewdness and debauchery. In the time of Jared, when the family of Seth was much increased, one hundred and twenty of the sons of that family, or as they were called, the Sons of God, hearing the sound of music, and the noise of festivity in the valley, agreed for once to descend from their mountain, and partake of the amusement. On their arrival, they were so delighted with the scene, and so captivated with the beauty of the women, who appeared naked, that they yielded to their charms, and defiled themselves with them. Having gone this length, it was not likely they should stop on the threshold of pleasure. Accordingly, returning from time to time to visit these women, they at last ventured to intermarry with them; and hence, probably, arose the story of the commerce between the Sons of God, and the Daughters of Men: a story which gave birth to an opinion, that by

† This tradition does not agree with the banishment of Cain, as mentioned by Moses.

**CHAP.** <sup>L</sup> the Sons of God were meant Angels, who had so far deviated from the dignity of their celestial nature, as to debase themselves by a carnal knowledge of terrestrial women. To this absurd and ridiculous notion, no little strength hath been added by a forgery, called the Prophecy of Enoch; a prophecy, which, like many others, is long, obscure, and unintelligible\*; evident marks of its not having been dictated by that divine spirit, who is light and perspicuity.

\* The general purport of this long and ill-connected prophecy, is, That in those times, women were so exceedingly beautiful and tempting, that the Egregarii, or guardian angels, who were set to watch over and attend them, being constantly exposed to the whole artillery of their charms, at last fell so violently in love with them, that they disclosed the secret to each other, and entered into an agreement, to take to themselves, from among them, wives of those that were fairest in their eyes. That accordingly, in the year of the world 1170, they began the execution of their project; and in the most daring and flagitious manner, continued it to the deluge. That in those days, were born to the angels who had thus married, giants, who devoured human flesh, of which they were so fond, that the race of man began thereby greatly to decrease; that many complaints on this subject having been made to God, he sent four archangels, who bound these angels, who had joined themselves to the women, and produced this monstrous progeny, threw them into the great abyss, and afterward sent Gabriel, another archangel, to root out and destroy the giants. — Other oriental traditions relate that it was the rebel angels, who had taken arms against Omnipotence, that first began this infamous commerce with mortal women, from whence sprung a race of monsters and dæmons inimical to virtue and to man; and who, by their continued crimes, at last provoked the Almighty to sweep them from the face of the earth by an universal deluge.

**BUT**

BUT though we cannot positively ascer-  
 tain the precise meaning of Moses, when he  
 says, the Sons of God defiled themselves  
 with the Daughters of Men, we may ven-  
 ture to affirm, that the expression was made  
 use of to characterise some peculiar species  
 of wickedness, which, with other debauch-  
 eries, had become so enormous, that the  
 Author of Nature is said to have repented  
 that he had made man; almost the whole  
 race of whom he was obliged to destroy by  
 a flood, in order that he might raise up a  
 new and more perfect generation; which  
 could not have been done, had the wicked  
 been left to have mixed with and contami-  
 nated the righteous.

CHAP.  
I.  
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FROM the flood, there is a chasm in the
 history of women till the time of the patri-
 arch Abraham, when they began to be
 more frequently introduced into the sacred
 story, several of their actions to be re-
 corded; the laws, customs, and usages by
 which they were governed to be exhibited:
 all which, joined to some anecdotes of their
 public and private life, enable us to give a
 more perfect account of the ancient Israeli-
 tish women, than can be given of those of

Chasm in
the history
of the sex:

CHAP. any other nation, till we come to the Greeks.

I.
~~~~~ In exhibiting this account, we have, however, judged it proper, not to take the incidents in the order in which they are related, but to reduce them under different heads, for the sake of method and regularity.

CHAP.

## C H A P, II.

*Of Female Education.*

**I**F any idea can be formed of the general state of mankind in the infancy of the world, from the particular state in which they appear in the infancy of every nation, we may suppose that they were originally but little acquainted with the conveniences, and entirely ignorant of the delicacies of social life; and that their knowledge extended hardly any farther, than to procure themselves a precarious subsistence from the rivers and forests around them,

C H A P.  
II.

NECESSARILY impelled to employ the greatest part of their time in this manner, they would have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination, to cultivate their minds. The inhabitants of the woods, and of the waves, were only to be caught by force or fraud: in either of which ways, strong exertions, or long and painful watchings, were requisite; and to these exertions, and other efforts, the constant calls of nature for sustenance kept up an unremitted attention:

Obstruc-  
tions to  
education  
in the ear-  
ly ages.


CHAP.  
II.



hence it would be long before the human mind began to extend its ideas beyond that circle which had been formed by necessity, and continued by custom. That course of study and of discipline, that application to various languages and arts, which we now call education, was then totally unknown; and in after ages sprung up by degrees, as incidents gave occasion to thinking on new subjects, and acting in new employments.

Source of  
education.

A CONSIDERABLE part of education is the study of languages. But as all men spoke originally the same, this laborious part had then no existence. When a diversity of tongues were introduced, travellers and merchants were obliged to study them, that they might be understood by the people among whom they sojourned, or with whom they trafficked. In some of the milder climates of Asia, the earth spontaneously yielded as much food as simple unpampered nature required; and the inhabitants supinely enjoyed her gifts, without troubling themselves with painful exertions of mind or of body. But when the human race had multiplied so much, that they were obliged to

to disperse themselves into climates less CHAP.  
II  
indulgent, exertion became necessary to   
procure food, and invention to remedy the  
inconveniences, and provide against the ac-  
cidents, of climate and situation: Thus in  
Egypt, the annual inundations of the Nile  
obliged them to raise houses on pillars, and  
to apply to Astronomy, that they might  
know the seasons when these inundations  
were to come upon them. The rigour of  
seasons, in places more remote from the sun,  
forced them to cover themselves with skins,  
and to build houses: and the same cause,  
perhaps, at first, gave birth to the use of  
fire. Were we thus to trace almost every  
human invention to its source, we should  
generally find that source to have been  
necessity.

In the patriarchal ages, and some time Progress  
of educa-  
tion and  
arts.  
after, even among people considerably re-  
moved from barbarity, we have hardly the  
least vestige of education among the men\*,

\* Schools where men were taught the arts of prophesying and of magic, were, probably, the first that were instituted; the former appear to have been erected by the Israelites, the latter by the Egyptians or Phœnicians.

and

CHAP.  
II.

and should therefore in vain look for it among the women. In climates where the spontaneous productions of the earth were few, and where men were become too numerous to be maintained by hunting and fishing, necessity would stimulate to pasturage, and perhaps to some rude efforts in agriculture; but as these could not be carried on without some kind of instruments, it was possibly to furnish such, that Tubal Cain began to work in iron and in brass. Such rude instruments as he at first constructed, might upon trial, suggest to him the improvements necessary for making others more adapted to the purposes for which they were intended, these again might lead on to works of fancy, works of fancy would expand the powers of the human mind, experiment and observation would follow, and at last open the way for the arts and the sciences. Such were the employments into which the men were initiated; but it is in vain that we endeavour to discover what instruction was bestowed on the women: whether they were regularly taught any thing, or left to learn what they could from nature, and from chance; which last we are inclined to think was the case, as writing  
and



and reading were not then invented; as the sciences were but few, and these few only in their infancy; and as women were not valued for any mental qualifications, but only for their personal charms.

CHAP.  
II.  
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Of all the nations which present themselves in the periods we are considering, the Egyptians most deservedly claim our attention; as it was from them that we derived the first principles of all our arts, sciences, and cultivation. It was the Egyptians who first taught the rude and uninstructed Greeks: the Greeks transmitted their knowledge to the Romans: and the Romans carried their knowledge, and their conquests, over half the globe. In whatever light we view the Egyptians, they do more honour to human nature than any of the ancients, as they excelled them all in laws, in arts, and in government; sciences in which they believed, or pretended to believe, they had been improving themselves during a period of no less than one hundred thousand years. However uncertain this notion of their antiquity may be, it is certain that they were allowed by most of the ancients, to have been one of the first people who were civilized

Of the E-  
gyptians.

CHAP.  
II.

civilized and formed into a nation, governed by laws founded on equity and wisdom ; in short they were, even in the distant periods we are speaking of, a people not much inferior to many of those which in our times make no despicable figure in the present civilized system of Europe.

In the periods under review, it is among the Egyptians only that we meet with any thing resembling a system of study and education. Their priests and magicians taught two kinds of literature; the sacred, which contained the mysteries of their religion, and the common, which contained their vulgar education; they also taught such other sciences as were then known, and particularly Astronomy, from which, it appears, that women were not altogether excluded; for we are told that Athyrte, the daughter of Sesostris, encouraged her father to undertake his chimerical scheme of conquering the world, by assuring him of success, from her divinations, from her dreams in the temples, and from the prodigies she had seen in the air. Almost every writer on ancient Egypt mentions, that the women managed the greatest part of such business



business as was transacted without doors, and that the commerce of the nation was peculiarly allotted to them; it is therefore highly probable, that they were taught the use of numbers and figures: sciences, without which trade must have been exceedingly imperfect and irregular. As writing was also known at an early period in Egypt, and as it is hardly less necessary in commerce than figures, it is probable also, that the women were taught the writing then in use. As the softness and sentimental feelings of the female heart seem excellently adapted to the soothing strains of music, music has therefore, from the remotest ages of antiquity, been a part of the education of the sex. Moses frequently mentions singing men and singing women, and we shall afterwards meet with singing women among a variety of the nations we shall have occasion to mention. The Egyptians, however, were in this respect singular; the same reason which determined other nations to teach women that pleasing art, determined the Egyptians to debar them from it\*;

\* Herodotus, and some other authors, doubt whether the Egyptians prohibited their women from learning music;

CHAP. <sup>H.</sup> “because,” said they, “it softens and relaxes  
~ “the mind.” But when we recollect what  
we just now related of the employment of  
women, it will in a great measure elucidate  
this singularity. It was probably the opi-  
nion of the legislature, that too much soft-  
ness and delicacy would disqualify them for  
managing the affairs of trade and commerce;  
and that though a certain softness of the  
sex was encouraged in all other countries,  
it would but ill have suited the Egyptian  
women, who were generally occupied in  
such employments as were every where else  
destined to the men. However this be,  
when we survey the accounts given us by  
the ancients, of the arts, sciences, laws; and,  
above all, of the culture and wisdom of the  
Egyptians; when we consider the high esti-  
mation, in which women were held, and  
the powers with which they were invested;  
when, to these, we add the literary fame of  
the nation, we have the strongest reasons to  
conclude, that though we are at this period  
unacquainted with their system of female  
education, it certainly was such as suited the  
dignity of so wise a people, and of a sex  
so loved and respected.

It is not easy to determine whether the Phœnicians at first borrowed their learning from the Egyptians or some other people. But, however that be, in the times we are considering they had made very considerable advances in literary knowledge. They cultivated Arithmetic and Astronomy, and applied them to the purposes of trade and navigation. Moschus, a Sydonian, before the Trojan war, taught the philosophical doctrine of Atoms; and Abdomeneus of Tyre, undertook to dispute with Solomon, king of Israel; in those days reckoned the most redoubtable champion of learning and of wisdom. Tyre and Sydon were at this time renowned for philosophy and the other sciences.

CHAP.  
II.Of the  
Phœnici-  
ans.

MAN, in his rude and uncultivated state, forms his connection with woman from a regard to the beauty of her person only; when he becomes civilized, he regards the qualities of her mind also. We can hardly therefore suppose, that the Phœnicians; a people, who in commerce and navigation excelled all others, and were second to none in politeness and learning; would totally neglect to instil into the minds of their

CHAP.  
II.



women, any of that knowledge which was in so much national esteem and veneration. But we only offer this as conjecture, the history of these people being entirely silent on the subject: and indeed history in general throws but a faint gleam of light on the ages under review; which, among many other reasons, may in part be owing to that peace and quiet which we may suppose the world then enjoyed for many ages; for history passes in silence over whole centuries of peace, and takes notice only of wars, conquests, and revolutions; as if nothing were worthy of the ear of posterity, but the crimes and follies of its ancestors.

Ancient  
state of  
Europe.

WHAT we have observed of the Phœnicians, may, in a great measure, be equally applied to the Babylonians; they are acknowledged by all antiquity, to have been the first who made use of writing in their public and judicial acts; but though we cannot positively ascertain whether they invented writing, we are nevertheless certain, that they were early distinguished for their politeness and learning. We shall have occasion afterwards to relate the care and pains they took in adorning the persons of their women;



women; from which we may conclude, that they did not leave their minds without cultivation and improvement. The nations which were contemporary with, or for several ages succeeded to those we have now mentioned, were, when compared to them, as the rest of the world now is, when compared to Europe; hardly just entering on the threshold of knowledge: and Europe, which now appears with such distinguished lustre, was then involved in ignorance and barbarity; nor had its scattered and wretched inhabitants discovered any symptoms of that genius for which they are at present so much distinguished. It was by some colonies from Asia, that the sciences were first introduced into this continent. And such is the fate of human affairs, that from the time these sciences were thus transplanted, they seemed to abandon their native soil, and attach themselves entirely to their new habitation. The Asiatics either lost their taste for them, or, in prosecuting them, had already exhausted their utmost powers. The Europeans acquired that taste, and continue still to cultivate and extend it, by stretches of invention, to which no limits can be fixed.

WHEN,

CHAP.  
II.

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Of some
other an-
cient na-
tions.

WHEN, from Europe, we again return to the East, we cannot help lamenting, that antiquity has hardly left us any traces of the manner in which their women were educated; and it is from scattered hints only, that we discover any thing concerning this subject. One of these hints informs us, that some of the nations conquered by Cyrus had taught their women music; for Cyrus, from the captives he had taken, gave two female musicians as a present to his uncle Cyaxares. Female as well as male musicians were in those times frequently retained by the great to amuse them in their hours of relaxation and festivity, by their skill in playing upon such instruments as were then in use, by the melody of their voices, and by the various gestures which they practised in dancing. If the plan of female education comprehended any thing farther, we may suppose that it took in only such other arts of attraction as the eastern women have always been famous for, and which the men have always regarded as their principle qualification. In a few cases, however, it is probable, they were instructed in some of the useful learning of the times; for the education of the children

children of the kings of the Medes and Persians, was, for many ages, committed to the women. Dejoces, their first king, began the custom ; it was continued till some ages after the reign of Cyrus, and is at this day practised in many places of the East. As these young monarchs were entirely entrusted to the care of women till the age of fifteen or sixteen, one would naturally conclude, that these women must have been capable of teaching, at least a part of, the fashionable learning of the times : but if it was the same among the ancient Medes and Persians, as it is now among their descendants, they were not capable of doing so ; for the education which the young eastern princes at present receive from their women, is little else than the first principles of effeminacy and debauchery, with hardly even a small tincture of that learning bestowed on their subjects : and hence so many of them, when they become monarchs, dedicate their lives to cruelty and debauchery. Even Cyrus himself, though trained up in a better manner, and almost, in every respect, superior to the herd of eastern monarchs, stained his memory with the foulest infamy, by perverting the education of the Lydians, for no other crime than

CHAP
II.

than endeavouring to regain their liberty, of which he had unjustly deprived them. Cyrus had intrusted the gold which he had found in the treasury of Cræsus king of Lydia, to Pactyas, one of his favourites; Pactyas seeing himself master of so much wealth, thought he could not better employ it, than in instigating the Lydians to shake off the yoke of the conqueror, and place him at their head. Cyrus, in revenge, determined to carry away the whole of the people, and sell them for slaves; a resolution which he made known to Cræsus, his prisoner. Cræsus fearing the utter destruction of his country, advised Cyrus only to take vengeance on Pactyas; and in order to prevent any future attempt of the same nature, to forbid the Lydians the use of arms, and oblige them to be educated in the most debauched and effeminate manner. Cyrus followed this advice, and the Lydians soon became the most infamous and abandoned people in the world. History affords but too many examples of monarchs, and of parents, having winked at the improper education of their subjects and children. This is the only instance, where the source of every virtue was avowedly contaminated by public authority; an instance

Instance in which we are at a loss to deter- CHAP.
mine, whether the character of Cyrus, or of II.
Cræsus, appears the most despicable and ~~~~~
infamous.


WERE we to indulge in idle speculation; were we to form conjectures without proper authority to support them; we might relate many plausible opinions concerning the education of women among the ancients; but as the subject, from the time of the Egyptians and some other nations we have mentioned, to those in which we become acquainted with, Greece and Rome, is involved in the deepest obscurity, we rather chuse to pass over it in silence, than to hazard opinions which at most have only bare possibility to recommend them to our notice.

WE shall see afterward, when we come to treat of the rank and condition of women, that in Greece, even in its most flourishing and cultivated state, they were little better than slaves. Nor was it possible, that they could in any place ever arrive at that importance seemingly designed them by nature, while their genius was not cultivated,

Of the
Greek
women.

CHAP. II. nor their latent qualities called forth into
 view. Visible qualities, such as beauty, and the art of shewing it to advantage, may, in these moments when the heart is softened by love, or the spirits elevated by wine, give the women a temporary ascendancy over the men, and enable them to bend them at pleasure; as in the case of Thais and Alexander, but such an ascendancy is commonly fleeting and transient. Cool reason soon resumes the place which passion had usurped, and the empire which had been built on passion, tumbles like the baseless fabric of a vision; while that which is supported by education and sense, stands the test of time, and the various incidents of life. It is, however, to be lamented, that a proper education has seldom fallen to the lot of the sex. Even in the politest countries, it is either too much neglected, or conducted on a frivolous or mistaken plan. Such appears to have been the education of the Greek women in the heroic ages*; for we find Peleus, in the *Andromache* of Euripides, reproaching Menelaus, on account of the dissolute

* Several of the first ages, during the infancy of the Grecian states, were called heroic; because then the men dedicated almost the whole of their time to feats of heroism and of arms.

behaviour and bad education of his wife. CHAP.
II.
Nor was bad education confined to her only, 
it was a prevailing evil, against which the
Greeks never applied any proper remedy.

IN ancient history there is no subject less
taken notice of than education, and particu-
larly that part of it which was bestowed on
women. In early periods, and among un-
cultivated people, the sex were not of con-
sequence enough to employ the attention of
the public, or the pen of the historian. A
few sketches of the plan of education set-
tled by Solon, the famous Athenian law-
giver, are the most antique that have been
handed down to our times; and they serve
to corroborate an opinion, which we have
always entertained, that the education of
the ancients was more directed to improve
the body than the mind. Solon ordained,
that youth in general should be first taught
to swim, and to imbibe the rudiments of
literature; that the poor should be instructed
in trades, mechanic arts, and agriculture;
but that such as could afford a genteel edu-
cation, should learn to play on musical in-
struments, to ride, to hunt, and be expert
in every kind of exercise; to all which they

Education
of ancient
women
not calcu-
lated to
cultivate
their
minds.

CHAP.
II.

were to add the study of philosophy. Such was his system of male education; a system more calculated to strengthen the body than to cultivate the mind. Any gleanings of his female system that have reached our times, are still more extraordinary. Young women were ordered to exercise themselves in running, wrestling, throwing quoits, darts, and other masculine amusements; which must have tended, in the strongest manner, to destroy every seed of delicacy that nature had implanted in their minds; and which, in all probability, gave birth to that boldness and effrontery, for which the Athenian women at last became so remarkable.

If Solon, in his scheme of legislation, instituted that any culture should be bestowed on the female mind, such institutions have not reached our times: and when we consider how the Greek women were treated; when we see that healthful and robust bodies were reckoned their chief qualification, as enabling them to give strong and healthful children to the state; we have reason to believe, that no such institutions ever existed. Lycurgus, the no less famous Spartan legislator, seems to have thought women almost

almost below his notice : nor need we wonder at this, when we consider, that his sole intention, and the constant scope of all his laws, was to divest his countrymen of every thing implanted in them by nature ; and, upon the principles of art, to form a race of heroes, who should be insensible to every feeling but the love of their country. Women, he found, were but ill calculated for this purpose. Patriotism is a principle seldom so strong in them as in men, and humanity is generally much stronger. The acuteness of their feelings made them less able to bear all the pains and difficulties of eradicating whatever is natural, and the weakness of their bodies disqualified them for becoming heroines. They were therefore unfit subjects for carrying the ideas of Lycurgus into execution ; and on that account, it seems probable, he gave himself little other trouble about them, than to take care that their company should neither effeminate nor debauch his men.

THAT the modest women of Grece had not the least tincture of polite education, even in the most flourishing periods of their country, appears from the respect and esteem which

CHAP.
II.

Their
minds
almost
totally
neglected.

CHAP.
II.

which public prostitutes acquired, merely by having the advantage over them in this accomplishment. We shall have occasion to mention this subject afterwards; and therefore at present shall only observe, that many of the greatest of their philosophers publicly visited these prostitutes, and even sometimes carried their wives and daughters along with them, that they might profit by their example and behaviour. Besides what we have already mentioned, we find that a few of the Greek women were instructed in music; and that such only were admitted to some of their public feasts. Their mothers, or other female relations, also taught them the common female employments and customs of their country, and instilled into the minds of such as would receive it, a tincture of that Stoical pride and heroism for which their men were so much renowned. In every thing else, they were miserably deficient, and their constant confinement added want of knowledge of the world, to their want of education; so that on the whole, never were women found so ignorant in a nation so much famed for learning. We have great reason to suppose that they were not even taught to read their own language,
for

CHAP.
II.

for we are told of a house having fallen at Delphi, and killed ninety-eight boys, who were learning to read; and as no mention is made of girls, it is likely they either received no education of this kind, or received it only at home, from mothers but ill qualified for the task.

Of the
Roman
women.

If we except the Egyptians, the whole history of antiquity exhibits to us a scene in which we find women groaning under the hard hand of oppression, deprived of almost every privilege; and till we arrive at the Romans, never attaining to any natural or political consequence. In Rome, however, we find them not only emerging from slavery, but starting up at once into real importance. In the earlier periods of this great republic, the Romans being poor, and surrounded with rude and ferocious neighbours like themselves, were obliged to learn rigid œconomy, inflexible patriotism, and the art of war; which are all virtues of necessity in the infancy of almost every state. The education of the women consisted in learning the duties and employment of domestic life; such as cookery, spinning, weaving, and sewing; which were taught them
by

CHAP.
II.

by their mothers or relations. These also superintended not only their serious studies, but even their amusements, which were always conducted with decency and moderation. But by degrees, as the Romans became rich with the plunder of their neighbours, as the taste for the arts and sciences became more general, the education of the women began to be extended on a larger scale; and to the domestic duties, taught them by their mothers, were added such parts of polite education, as were thought necessary for cultivating their minds. This education, we know, from the story of Virginea, they received at public schools; where sciences and literature, now escaping from the closets of rigid philosophy, began to assume a softer form, and to suit themselves to female talents and genius.

It has long been alleged by the men, that women, when learned, are generally pedants. How far this opinion is just, we shall not pretend to determine; but should it really be so, we may naturally enough account for it. The knowledge of women, is in general, much less extensive than that of the men; on this account, when any individual
among


Among them finds that she is possessed of a considerable share of it, she considers herself as thereby so much elevated above the rest of her sex, that she cannot help taking every opportunity of shewing this elevation.

CHAP.
II.

JUVENAL exhibits some of the Roman ladies in this light, and what he says of them, though meant as a satire, affords a proof that in his time their education was not neglected: but this is not the only proof we can bring, others are frequently to be met with in the Roman history. Cicero mentions, with encomiums, several ladies, whose taste in eloquence and philosophy did honour to their sex; and Quintilian, with considerable applause, has quoted some of the letters of Cornelia; besides which, we have fortunately a speech of Hortensia, preserved by Appian; which for elegance of language, and justness of thought, would have done honour to a Cicero, or a Demosthenes*.

* The unhappy women you see here imploring your justice and bounty, would never have presumed to appear in this place, had they not first made use of all other means which their natural modesty could suggest to them. Though our appearing here may seem contrary to the

CHAP.
II.

What gave occasion to the speech was, the

 Triumvirs of Rome wanted a large sum of money for carrying on a war, and having met with great difficulties in raising it, they drew up a list of fourteen hundred of the

rules of decency prescribed to our sex, which we have hitherto observed with all strictness; yet the loss of our fathers, children, brothers, and husbands, may sufficiently excuse us, especially when their unhappy deaths are made a pretence for our further misfortunes: you pretend that they had offended and provoked you, but what injury have we women done, that we must be impoverished? if we are blameable as the men, why do you not proscribe us too? have we declared you enemies to your country? have we suborned your soldiers, raised troops against you, or opposed you in the pursuits of those honours and offices which you claim? We pretend not to govern the republic, nor is it our ambition which has drawn the present misfortunes on our heads; empire, dignities, and honours are not for us; why should we then contribute to a war in which we have no manner of interest? It is true, indeed, that in the Carthaginian war, our mothers assisted the republic, which was, at that time, reduced to the utmost distress; but neither their houses, their lands, nor their moveables, were sold for that service; some rings and a few jewels furnished the supply; nor was it constraint, nor violence, that forced these from them: what they contributed was the voluntary offering of generosity. What danger at present threatens Rome? If the Gauls, or Parthians, were encamped on the banks of the Tiber, or the Anio, you should find us not less zealous in the defence of our country than our mothers were before us; but it becomes not us, and we are resolved that we will not be any way concerned in civil war. Neither Marius, nor Cæsar, nor Pompey, ever thought of obliging us to take part in the domestic troubles which their ambition had raised; nay, nor did even Sylla himself, who first set up tyranny in Rome; and yet you assume the glorious title of Reformers of the State! a title which will turn to your eternal infamy; if, without the least regard to the laws of equity, you persist in your wicked resolution of plundering those of their lives and fortunes, who have given you no just cause of offence.

richest

CHAP.
II.

richest of the ladies, intending to tax them. These ladies, after having in vain tried every method to evade so great an innovation, at last chose Hortensia for their speaker, and went along with her to the market-place, where she addressed the Triumvirs, while they were administering justice. The Triumvirs being offended at the boldness of the women, ordered them to be driven away; but the populace growing tumultuous, they were afraid of an insurrection; and reduced the list of women to be taxed to four hundred.

As we do not propose to write the history of learned women, but only to give a general detail of the care bestowed on the education of that sex; we return to observe, that the Romans, with the utmost assiduity, cultivated the minds of their young men; and we may therefore assure ourselves that the women, who had now attained no small importance, were not neglected: and it is probable, from the greatness of mind, which many of them in a variety of instances displayed, that their education had always a tendency, not only to inspire them with sentiments of morality, but likewise with

CHAP. II. that inflexible constancy and firmness, so exceedingly necessary in a state, whose agitations and convulsions were so frequent and severe, that they required the utmost fortitude to sustain them.

SUCH a mode of education, however, we imagine, was counteracting nature, and robbing the sex of that gentleness of manners, which constitutes more than half their charms; but this effect it produced only in particular instances, and never had any general influence; for the Roman women, though they boasted while in security of all the heroism of their husbands, were in such a consternation when Hannibal approached the gates of Rome, that they were forbid to appear in the streets, lest their cries should dispirit the soldiers, and spread a general panic through the city.

As we are able only to give so imperfect an account of the female education of the Romans, a people whose history we are almost as well acquainted with, as with that of our own times; it is not to be expected that we can throw much light upon the subject, among the nations that were contemporary with

with them, as they were in a state of too much ignorance to have any historical records of their own; and as we have scarcely any detail of their manners and customs, besides a few sketches in Tacitus, and some of the other Roman writers,

CHAP.
II



If by education we mean the culture of letters, of arts, and of sciences; in vain will we look for it among the ancient inhabitants of the North. The Scandinavians, and other tribes, who, in the earliest times, possessed the greatest part of Europe, were hardly acquainted with the slightest rudiments of literature, or of science. In the savage state in which they were, no ideas are entertained of the necessity, or utility, of any thing that does not immediately contribute to the sustenance or cloathing of the body; no honour to procuring these, by any other methods, than rapine and plunder; hence their men were trained to gaining their subsistence by feats of arms, and wasting it in thoughtless festivity. Their women, who frequently accompanied the men in their plundering expeditions, and who besides, had every labour and drudgery to perform, could not have much time nor opportunity for

Women
of the
northern
nations,
how edu-
cated.

CHAP. II. for attaining knowledge. As they were not, however, always of these parties, but sometimes left at home; if there were any glimmerings of knowledge; if there was any wisdom, it was mostly to be found among them; and they acquired it, not by a laborious course of education, but by experience and reflection upon the contingencies which happened in these hours of solitude, when the human mind is most susceptible of instruction.

WHAT they had thus learned, of arts, of improvements, or œconomy, they taught their daughters; hence women were generally more enlightened than men; and hence also they acquired an extraordinary degree of esteem, and were often consulted as oracles. Besides the few arts and domestic occupations known among a people so rude and simple, the mothers also exerted themselves in teaching their daughters the virtues of prudence and chastity; which they did no less by example than by precept; and both being united, had so happy an effect, that the ancient Scandinavian women were not only among the first who attained to that esteem due to their sex, but who laid the foundation

foundation of that honour and regard, which Europe at present pays as a tribute to beauty and merit.

CHAP.
II.

BUT this relative condition of the sexes was not peculiar to the ancient Northerners, it seems every where to be one of the marks which distinguish a rude and barbarous people, and is at present to be found in many parts of the globe, particularly among the Druses of mount Libanus; who reckon learning one of those low and contemptible acquisitions which are only fit for women, and therefore they leave to that sex the care of instructing their youth, of explaining the sacred books of their religion, and of keeping the precepts and mysteries contained in them an inviolable secret; which last they have done so carefully, that hardly any thing has ever transpired concerning them.

During the long and successful reign of chivalry in Europe; as women were the constant object of romantic heroism and extravagant adoration, we may naturally conclude, that their education tended chiefly to enable them to shew themselves in such a manner, as to excite heroes to fight for, and

Effects of
chivalry.

CHAP.
II.



and lovers to adore them. We cannot expect that they were possessed of any literary attainments, when no such attainments were to be found among the men; the Greek was so entirely neglected, that the celebrated Petrarch could not in Italy, nor France, find one person capable of instructing him in it: the Latin was known in a rude and imperfect manner only to a few; and hardly was there to be found a woman, who could read the language of her own country; and if such a one was here and there to be met with, she was reckoned a kind of prodigy. This we learn from a variety of the authors who have treated of these times, and particularly from the Troubadours; one of whom speaking of a lady of an exalted rank, has these remarkable words, “ She approves my writings, and she can read them.”

WHEN the men, who before had spent their days in tournaments and feats of arms, began to turn their attention towards the arts of peace, the women were likewise laid under the necessity of varying the mode of education; and as they found that the same arts which effectually captivated a knight

clad



clad in armour and ignorance, were in vain practised upon the enlightened scholar and philosopher; and were conscious that the way to please the men was to seem fond of what they approved of, and dislike what they disliked; they applied themselves to letters and philosophy, hoping to keep possession by their talents, of what they had gained by their charms. Though these measures were not calculated to inspire love, and attract the heart, and consequently did not produce the effects which the ladies intended, yet they raised them in that period to a pitch of learning, unknown in any other. They preached in public, supported controversies, published and defended Theses's, filled the chairs of philosophy and law, harangued the popes in Latin, wrote Greek, and read Hebrew: Nuns became poetesses. Women of quality divines. And young girls, with a softness of eloquent enthusiasm, publicly exhorted the Christian princes to take up arms for the recovery of the Holy Land. The learned languages were now considered as indispensibly necessary; and not only men, but women of all ranks and conditions were taught them. In this manner was female genius turned into a

CHAP. wrong channel. It was diverted from the
 II. duties of domestic life. It was either soured
 by study, or rendered petulant by learning;
 and while it acquired empty words and false
 philosophy, it lost much of its native spright-
 linefs, and became daily more an object of
 admiration, and less an object of love.

Reverse
 of this
 picture.

No fact can be better established than, that violent exertions of mind, as well as of body, constantly leave a proportionable languor behind them. This was remarkably the case with female literature; every mental power had been for a long time overstretched, and the greatest relaxation soon followed of consequence: by their knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; by their skill in divinity and the empty disputations of Aristotelian philosophy, women began at last to discover, that they acquired only an empty fame; and that in proportion as they gained the esteem of the head, they became less objects of the heart. On this discovery, it was necessary for them to change their plan; they therefore began by degrees to abandon learning, and attach themselves again to those female arts, which were more likely to be productive of love, than of fame and applause. WHILE

WHILE this change of female manners was taking place, the greatest part of Europe exhibited a scene of seeming inconsistency. Enthusiasm and gallantry, religion and licentiousness, were constantly practised by the same persons, as if they had been perfectly reconcilable to each other. Learning, however, declined so fast, that in a short time women became as conspicuous for ignorance of their own language, as they had formerly been for their knowledge of others; infomuch, that during a great part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was hardly a woman to be found in the politest countries of Europe, who could spell her own mother tongue with accuracy, or dictate a letter in it with ease and elegance. The only little reading which they at this period commonly concerned themselves with, was a few receipts in cookery to bring on, and a few receipts in phyfic to take off diseases; to which they added the wrangling and unintelligible theology of the times; a science to which women of all ages and countries have been peculiarly addicted, as it greatly interests their passions; and, perhaps, consoles them in the many solitary moments in which they are left alone,

C H A P.
II.



Further
revoluti-
ons.

CHAP.
II.



and as it were excluded from business and from the world. But even these favourite studies, and every other part of female amusement and œconomy, not being sufficient to fill up all their vacant hours, they now applied themselves to various kinds of needlework; and many women of the first rank were themselves taught, and instructed their daughters in the arts of flowering and embroidery; which they practised so assiduously in their leisure hours, that much of the furniture of their houses was decorated in this manner with their own hands.

AFTER the discovery and conquest of America, immense treasures of gold and silver were imported from thence into Europe. From the trade carried on with Asia, with Africa, and other parts of the globe, perhaps still greater riches had been accumulated; these at last beginning to operate, the minds of the greatest part of Europe were turned from that sober and œconomical plan of life, to which their poverty and imperfect knowledge of trade and agriculture had subjected them; to a love of gaiety, expence, and parade. Numbers of people, who, perhaps, not in the most rigid
paths

paths of justice, had acquired immense for-
 tunes in the East, transported themselves
 back to Europe, bringing along with them
 all the arrogance of wealth, effeminacy of
 manners, and love of pageantry and show,
 for which the eastern nations have ever been
 remarkable. These, and several other causes
 combining together, totally changed the
 manners of Europe; and instead of sober
 frugality, and other domestic virtues,, in-
 troduced luxury and dissipation; with a
 taste for all the tinsel glare of unsubstantial
 trifles.

THE French, who have always been re-
 markably distinguished for vivacity and
 show, taking the lead in this new mode of
 life, soon disseminated it all over Europe;
 which, for at least these two centuries past,
 has awkwardly imitated every light fashion
 and frippery of that volatile people, with
 little better success than a Bear dances a
 hornpipe, or a Monkey puts on the gravity
 of an alderman.

IN France, women were first introduced
 to court; their education, which before that
 introduction, consisted in reading their own
 language,

CHAP.
II.



French
ladies,
their edu-
cation.

CHAP.
II.

language, in learning needle-work, and the offices of domestic life, was then by degrees changed to vocal and instrumental music, drawing, dancing, and dressing in the most fashionable manner; to which we may add, the art of captivating and governing their men. This flimsy pattern was copied by every other nation. Some strokes of improvement were from time to time added by the French; till at last almost every thing useful was boldly struck out from the plan of female education; and the women of the present age thereby robbed of half their native excellence, and rendered objects more sought after to divert a melancholy hour, or satisfy a lawless passion, than to become the social partners of a life directed by reason and religion. We must, however, allow, that the French ladies are not all so much devoted to fashion and pleasure, as to neglect every thing else. France has produced several women distinguished for their judgment and learning; and even in the present dissipated age, while female coteries commonly meet for diversion, or for gaming, there are in Paris societies of women, which meet at stated times to determine the merit of every new work; and happy is the author who

who meets their approbation; their weight in the scale of literature, as well as of politics, being for the most part sufficient to over-balance any thing that can be opposed to it.

CHAR.
II
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SHOULD this imperfect attempt, to write the History of the Fair, survive the present, and be read in any future generation, when this frivolous mode of female education shall have given place to a better, that our readers may then have some idea of what it was towards the close of the eighteenth century, we shall just sketch the outlines of it as now practised in the politest countries of Europe. Among the first lessons, which a mother teaches her daughter, is that important article, according to the modern phrase, *of holding up her head*, and learning a proper carriage. This begins to be inculcated at the age of three or four at latest; and is strenuously insisted on for many years afterward. When the young lady has learned imperfectly to read her own language, and sometimes even sooner, she is sent to a boarding-school, where she is instructed in the most flimsy and useless parts of needle-work, and left entirely ignorant of those which

Present  
mode of  
female e-  
ducation.

CHAP.  
II.



which are useful and necessary. While she is here, some part of her time is spent in further learning to read, either her own language, or the language of some of the neighbouring kingdoms; all which are too frequently taught without a proper attention to Grammar or Orthography. Writing, and Arithmetic, likewise employ a part of her time; but these, particularly the last, are only considered as auxiliary accomplishments, which are not to be carried into life, and consequently deserve but little attention. The grand effort is generally made to teach the girl what the woman will relinquish; such as drawing, music, and dancing. These, as they are arts agreeable to youthful sprightliness, often engage the young lady so much, as to make her neglect, or forget every thing else. To what we have now mentioned are added, the modes of dressing in fashion. The punctilios of behaving in company. And we are sorry to say, that into some schools have been introduced masters to teach the fashionable games at cards; a dissipation, if not a vice, which already prevails too much among both sexes, and may perhaps still gain ground by this early initiation.

SUCH,

CHAP.  
II.Reflections  
on it.

SUCH, with a few trifling variations, is the common course of European education; a course, which seems almost entirely calculated to cultivate the personal graces, while the care of the head, and of the heart, are little, if at all, attended to; and the useful duties of domestic life, but too often turned into ridicule, as the obsolete employments of such silly women as drawled out an insipid existence a century or two ago, unacquainted with fashion and with pleasure. Women so educated, may be sought after to help in trifling away an idle hour; but whatever progress their personal charms may make on the passions, when the hours of trifling and of passion are over, they must infalliably be neglected, if not despised. We would wish them therefore to consider, that when youth and beauty shall be no more, when the crowd of flatterers and admirers shall have ceased to attend, something will then be necessary to fill up the void, and prevent the peevishness and disgust which the want of such attendance often occasions; that the natural source of this something, is friendship; and that friendship cannot exist, unless it is built upon the foundation of reason and of sense.

CHAP.  
II.

Of the  
Eastern  
women,  
how edu-  
cated.

IF the history of the education of women, in Europe, where they are objects so interesting, and so much esteemed by the men, has given but little pleasure in the recital, it will give still less in Asia, Africa, and America, where they are commonly either enslaved or disregarded: in both which cases nothing is so necessary as ignorance; nor would any thing so effectually spoil them for their slavery, as education and knowledge\*; which, by opening and expanding their minds, would soon discover to them, that our sex assumed a power not founded in nature; and treated them with a severity inconsistent with gentleness and humanity. For these reasons, it is the interest of the men, that almost no culture should be bestowed on their minds, lest it should teach them to assert the rights of nature, and refuse to submit to the yoke of bondage so unjustly imposed upon them.

IN several of the warmer regions of Asia and Africa, where women are considered merely as instruments of animal pleasure,

\* In some parts of India, women of fashion think it below them to learn to read. "Reading," say they, "is only fit for slave girls, to enable them to chaunt hymns in the temples."

the little education bestowed upon them, is entirely calculated to give additional charms to their persons, and debauch their minds. They are instructed in such graces, and alluring arts, as tend to inflame the passions. They are taught vocal and instrumental music, which they accompany with dances, in which every movement, and every gesture, is expressively indecent. But they receive no moral instruction, for it would teach them that they were doing wrong. No improvement, for it would shew them that they were degrading themselves, by being only trained up to satisfy the pleasures of sense. This, however, is not the practice of all parts of Asia and Africa: the women of Hindostan are educated more decently. They are not allowed to learn music or dancing; which are only reckoned accomplishments fit for ladies of pleasure. They are, notwithstanding, taught all the personal graces; and particular care is taken to instruct them in the art of conversing with elegance and vivacity. Some of them are also taught to write, and the generality to read, that they may be able to read the Koran; instead of which, they more frequently dedicate themselves to tales and

CHAP.  
II.

romances; which, being related in all the lively imagery of the East, seldom fail to corrupt the minds of creatures shut up from the world, and consequently forming to themselves extravagant and romantic notions of all that is transacted in it.

IN well regulated families, women are obliged to learn by heart some prayers in Arabic, which they assemble in a hall at certain hours to repeat, never being allowed the liberty of going to a public mosque. They are enjoined always to wash themselves before praying; and, indeed, the virtues of cleanliness, of chastity, and obedience, are so strongly and constantly inculcated on their minds, that, in spite of their general debauchery of manners, there are not a few among them, who, in their common deportment, do credit to the instructions bestowed upon them; nor is this much to be wondered at, when we consider the tempting recompence that is held out to them. They are, in paradise, to flourish for ever, in the vigour of youth and beauty; and however old, ugly, or deformed, when they depart this life, are there to be immediately transformed into all that is fair, and all that is graceful.

IN

IN China, where, education is in greater CAP.  
II  
~~~~ esteem than in any part of the world; where, it is almost the only road to preferment, and where, the men are consequently at the greatest pains to acquire it, we might naturally expect, that as the women possess a considerable share of esteem and regard, the culture of their minds should not be neglected: but whether they are even taught to read or write their own language, which is a work of many years, we are not informed by any of the voyages and travels which have fallen into our hands. As the task of learning to read or to write the Chinese language is so long and laborious, that even among the men it seems chiefly confined to such as aspire after employments of state, we are of opinion, that women are seldom or never much instructed in it. We are told, however, that such as are rich, learn music, the modes of behaviour, and ceremonial punctilios of the country; which last they cannot possibly be without; as a failure in the least circumstance, as the number of bows, or the manner of making them to a superior, would infallibly stamp the mark of ignorance on the person so failing. Women are in general also taught a bash-


C H A P.
II.



a bashfulness and modesty of behaviour, not to be met with in any other country; this, however, is too often but a semblance; a mere outside of virtue, which the wearer can occasionally put on, or shake off, as she has occasion to appear virtuous, or to yield to the temptations of vice.

African
women,
their edu-
cation.

SUCH, with very little variation, is the education of women over all Asia. When we turn towards Africa, we find the men still more brutish and ignorant, and the women consequently more abused and neglected. But however ignorant and brutish the present inhabitants of Africa are, their country was, in the time of the Roman empire, the seat of the sciences of learning and of heroism. The African love of learning was then so great, that in Egypt a library was collected; which, for its number of books, equalled almost any of our modern times; and, for costliness, much excelled all that we are now acquainted with; being most of them wrote in letters of gold, by dissolving it in some liquid, and writing with the solution as we do with ink, a secret much esteemed in those times, but now entirely lost. When the Turks made themselves
masters

masters of Egypt, this famous library was, CHAP.
II.
by superstition, condemned to the flames;  avarice, however, a passion much less destructive, saved a part of what superstition had devoted to ruin. The Sultan had ordered all the books to be burnt, but such as treated of Mahometism. The minister who executed his orders, burnt only all that were old and in bad condition, saved all the new and elegant, and sold them privately among the officers of the court. Since this period, the faith of Mahomet has spread itself over a great part of Africa; literature has daily declined, and, at present, there is hardly any vestige of learning, of arts, or of sciences, left in that extensive region. Agriculture is consigned entirely to the women, and managed in the most rude and slovenly manner. The few trades and arts practised are only the result of necessity, and carried on with a slowness and want of invention, which strongly mark their deficiency of genius.

AMONG a people so barbarous, it would be in vain to expect any female learning; all the attention bestowed on that miserable sex, is only in teaching them to bear the
load

CHAP.
II.



load of oppression laid on their shoulders by their lazy and imperious masters. This slavery of the body, and total neglect of the mind, naturally excite our indignation; but they arose at first from an idea of female inferiority, and have been ever since preserved by custom. The Africans, and even the Mahometans in Asia and in Europe, never make companions of their women, nor associate with them, but in the moments dedicated to love and dalliance; hence the women have no opportunity of practising upon the men those arts, by which, in other countries, they gain an ascendancy over the heart, and interest every social, and every sentimental feeling in their favour.

Of the
American
women.

THE education of the various tribes of savages, who inhabit the vast continent of America, seems in general better adapted to their mode of life than that of Europe; the whole scope of it being well calculated to make them patient of every possible evil and suffering, which may befall them in the course of a life destined almost to one continued scene of dangers and fatigues. Nor is this plan of education confined to boys only; it is extended to girls also, who are taught

taught to bear the rigors of the climate, the fatigues of labour, the cravings of extreme hunger, the various vicissitudes of fortune, and even torture itself, not only with patience, but an amazing degree of resolution. The parents sometimes tie the naked arms of a boy and girl together, hold a lighted candle between them, and attend to see which shall shew the greatest fortitude. In this firey trial, the girl frequently triumphs over her competitor. To an education of this kind, it is owing, that while in other countries, the pains of child-bearing generally extort groans and cries even from the most resolute of the sex, in America, the severest labour can seldom shake their constancy, or discover their weakness. But to attain this resolution and fortitude, which render them superior to every contingency, is not the only scope of their education, they are also taught to improve their strength by dexterity, and to ward off the evils and disasters of life, as well as to bear them with patience and resignation.

In a great part of North America, it is a fundamental rule in education, never to beat their children of either sex; which,

CHAP. II. say they, would only weaken and dispirit
 ~~~~~ their minds, without producing any good  
 effect; and, therefore, whenever a mother  
 sees her daughter behave ill, instead of hav-  
 ing recourse to a rod, she falls a crying;  
 the daughter naturally enquires the cause;  
 the mother answers, because you disgrace  
 me; a reproach which seldom fails to pro-  
 duce an amendment; but, should it happen  
 otherwise, the mother, as a last resource,  
 throws a little water on her face; a chastise-  
 ment with which she is commonly so much  
 affected, that she seldom ventures to do any  
 thing that may subject her to a repetition  
 of it.

IN Japan, the same gentleness must be  
 used in the education of children; the pu-  
 nishments inflicted in most other nations,  
 only make the Japanese more stubborn and  
 refractory; and sometimes there, as well  
 as in America, provoke them to commit  
 suicide; a crime to which they are addicted  
 on the most trifling affront; and which the  
 Americans coolly and deliberately perpe-  
 trate, when tired of life. This stubbornness  
 of temper is not peculiar to Japan, or  
 to America; it seems either to depend on  
 savage-

savageness of manners, or perhaps to be peculiar to some distinct kinds of the human race; as we find it also in Greenland, and several other places; even where the people have but little resemblance to each other in manners, customs, or disposition.

CHAP.  
II.



OF all the ancient inhabitants of America, the Peruvians seem to have been the most enlightened; it has been supposed, that this was owing to their first Inca being an European, accidentally shipwrecked on their coast. However this be, it is certain, that they greatly surpassed all their countrymen in arts, in manners, and even in learning. Their Virgins of the Sun, in particular, were brought up in the temple dedicated to that luminary, with great care; they were instructed by women, appointed for the purpose, in every female art and accomplishment known among them; as well as in the practice of the virtues of chastity, honesty, and benevolence; virtues for which the ancient Peruvians were eminently distinguished. In Mexico, also, their young women of quality were educated by matrons, who overlooked their conduct with great circumspection; and it would seem also, that those

CHAP.  
II.

of every condition were carefully instructed in what was thought necessary for them; for we are informed by Don Antonio de Solis, that in Mexico all new born infants were carried to the temple, where the priest received them, and put into their hands things symbolical of their occupations in life. A sword was put into the hand of a male infant of quality; some mechanical instrument into that of a peasant; and into the hands of all female infants, of whatever condition, was put a distaff, to signify, that their lives were to be destined to spinning and other domestic employments. From these instances it appears, that in South America, where they enjoy a milder climate, whose spontaneous productions preclude the necessity of procuring subsistence by the perilous occupations of fishing and hunting, their education too, is of a softer nature than in North America; where tenderness would effectually disqualify them for bearing the fatigues of their employment, and the severities of their climate. But while the North Americans educate their young women in the hardy manner we have mentioned, they seem at the same time to conduct this education in such a manner, as if they would wish

wish to throw into the female composition, some of that softness of manners and person, which men in all ages and nations have at least had some faint ideas of in the other sex. While their male children are young, they lay them on the skins of panthers, that they may thereby acquire the strength, cunning, and agility of that animal. Their females they lay on the skins of fawns, and other mild animals, that, like them, they may become soft, gentle, and engaging.

C A H P.  
II

WHEN we take a retrospective view of these sketches of the education of women, it affords matter of astonishment, that a sex, who are the sharers of our nature, and destined to be the companions of our lives, should have been constantly either shamefully neglected, or perverted by what was meant to serve as instruction. In Europe, their education seems only calculated to inspire them with love of admiration, of trifling, and of amusement. In most other places of the globe, it goes a step farther; it tends to eradicate every moral sentiment, and introduce vice dressed up in the garb of voluptuous refinement. Scarcely has there ever appeared in any period, or in any nation,

Reflections on the education of women.

CHAP. II. nation, a legislator, who has made it the  
 subject of his serious attention; and the  
 men, who are greatly interested, that women  
 should be sensible and virtuous, seem, by  
 their conduct towards that sex, to have en-  
 tered into a general conspiracy to render  
 them otherwise.

WHEN such is the hard fate of women,  
 we cannot wonder that they have ever  
 been distinguished for a want of literary  
 knowledge. There has, however, in all  
 ages, been some particulars among them,  
 who either by being endowed with more  
 genius, or by turning it into another chan-  
 nel, have acquired no incompetent share  
 of the learning of the times in which they  
 lived; thus, though we have already seen  
 that the Greek women were in general ex-  
 tremely ignorant, there were some excep-  
 tions to that common character. Arete, the  
 daughter of Aristippus, taught philosophy,  
 and the sciences, to her son; who, on that  
 account, was called *Metrodidas*; i. e.,  
 taught by his mother. Corinna, a Theban  
 poetess, no less than five times bore away  
 the palm in triumph from the celebrated  
 Pindar; and Aspasia, a noble Milesian lady,  
 instructed





instructed Pericles, the famous Athenian philosopher. We have already mentioned some of the learned Roman ladies. France has had a Dacier, England a Carter, and many others too tedious to mention. In Italy, where poets, a few centuries ago, were revered as divinities, several women arrived at no mean degree of reputation in that art; and our own times have seen the ceremony of a poetess being solemnly crowned with laurel at Rome.

THESE particular instances, however, have no influence on the women in general. A genius of either sex, will infallibly soar above the common level; but the herd of mankind, who feel not the same impulse, nor are actuated by the same fire, will still jog on in the ordinary track. While our warmest wishes are, that female education were an object more considered by the legislature, and better planned by parents and guardians, we would not have it understood as our opinion, that women should pore out their fair eyes in becoming adepts in literature. Nature seems not to have intended them for the more intense and severe studies. Besides, should they proceed so far as to rival,

CHAP.  
II.

rival, or even to equal us in learning, we should perhaps grudge them the laurels of fame, as much as we do the breeches: and the gaining of these laurels would rob their brows of many of those charms, which to them are more valuable, as they are by us more esteemed. We pretend not to chalk out the plan in which women should be educated; only, this we venture to affirm, that it should, if possible, be such as to avoid ignorance on the one hand, and pedantry on the other: Ignorance makes a female companion contemptible, pedantry makes her ridiculous; nor is it easy to say which of the two are most disgusting.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

*Of the Employments and Amusements of Women.*

IN every country, where agriculture and civilization have provided for the body and refined the mind, women are considered, not so much as the partners of our toil and labour, as the sweetners of our pleasures and enjoyments: while we exert ourselves abroad, in cultivating the fields, carrying on trades, and working at manufactures, we leave them at home to enjoy the fruits of our industry; when we return, we lay these fruits at their feet, happy ourselves, if we can contribute to their happiness.

Thus exempted from the labour of procuring their subsistence, the sex have a great deal of time upon their hands, which the domestic duties that fall to their share are not sufficient to fill up. Where the spirits are active, and the imagination lively, time thus unoccupied is a blank, tediously disagreeable. In order, therefore, to fill up this

VOL. I.

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blank,

CHAP. blank, a variety of little employments, di-  
 III.  
 ~~~~~ versions, and amusements, have been con-  
 trived; many of them adapted to both sexes,
 and some of them to the fair sex only.

IN states of the most savage barbarity, or in those but a few degrees removed from it, women being considered only as the slaves and drudges of the men; and as the instruments of population, are destined only to labour for their imperious tyrants, or to bring up their children. Thus constantly employed, they have but little time; and constantly depressed, they have but little inclination for amusement. In such states and conditions of human nature, we shall therefore meet with few female diversions, and these too, only such as seem to have arisen from nature, or from chance, and not from any exertion of genius or refinement in the pursuit of pleasure,

IN the East, where women are exempted from labour; not because they are esteemed and regarded, but because it would render them less delicate instruments of voluptuous pleasure; they are confined to seraglios and harems, where neither their employments
 nor

nor amusements can admit of much variety; and where a large portion of their time is consumed in regret, or slumbered away in that soft indolence and relaxation of body and mind, which the inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges reckon the highest felicity that can be attained in this world, and the chief ingredient in the beatitude of that which is to come.

CHAP.
III.



As the necessities of nature must be satisfied before any other object can engross the attention, such employments as tended to procure food, must have been every where prior to amusements. Accordingly we advance many centuries into the history of the world, before we have any account of them, and many of the first ages of barbarity; the subsequent ones of labour and simplicity, generally pass away, before infant states find time to think of, or inclination to pursue any diversion or amusement. Private and trifling diversions may arise from merriness of heart; public ones are only founded on idleness and affluence.

Diversions and amusements, the result of idleness.

In the earlier ages of antiquity, it was not inconsistent with the highest dignity, to


CHAP.
III.



Women
of anti-
quity
how em-
ployed.

act in what we would reckon the meanest of menial employments. Gideon and Arunath assisted in the various labours of husbandry. Abraham went and brought a calf from the flock, skinned it, and gave it to his wife, who dressed it: then he himself took butter and milk, and the calf which was dressed; set them before the angels, and stood by them under a tree; a custom to this day continued among many of the eastern nations, especially in the Levant; where nothing is more common than to see their princes fetch home from their flocks, and kill, whatever they have pitched upon for the use of their families; while the princesses their wives, or daughters, prepare a fire, and perform the office of an European cook-maid.

ANOTHER part of female employment in the earlier ages, was grinding of corn. The ancients had not, and in many countries they still have not, mills so constructed as to go by wind or water. Theirs were only two small stones, the uppermost of which was turned by the hand, a task generally performed by two women. Such were used in Egypt in the time of Pharaoh; for

for Moses, in the relation of the plagues CHAP.
III.
which invested that country on account of 
the Israelites, says, “ that the first-born
“ throughout all the land died, from the
“ first-born of Pharaoh who was upon the
“ throne, to the first-born of the maid-
“ servant that was behind the mill.” They
were used in the time of our Saviour, who
says, “ two women shall be grinding at the
“ mill; the one shall be taken, and the other
“ left.” They are used at this day, all over
the Levant, and even in the north of Scot-
land; where the women while turning them,
sing a particular song, intended perhaps to
divert them from thinking on the severity of
their labour. When the women had grind-
ed the corn into meal, it was likewise their
province to make it into bread. Sarah was
ordered by her husband, when he enter-
tained the angels, to make cakes for them.
Cakes, among many of the ancients, were
offered on the altars of their Deities, parti-
cularly on those of Ceres, where they smok-
ed with peculiar propriety.

PASTURAGE was almost the only method
of subsistence in the times we are speaking
of; and the women of every rank and
condition,

CHAP.
III.


condition, as well as the men, were not exempted from attending on the flocks, drawing water for them to drink, and doing all the other offices which the nature of such an employment required. Pasturage obliged the ancient Israelites, and other inhabitants of the East, to embrace a wandering life, that they might procure fresh food for their flocks. Instead, therefore, of dwelling in houses, they erected only tents, for the convenience of frequent removals: these tents were made of camel's hair and wool, the spinning and weaving of which was a part of the occupation of their women; and from the time that cloth was substituted, instead of the skins of animals, as a covering for the body, the whole operation of making it devolved also on the women, who weaved it in the most simple manner, by conducting the woof with their fingers, instead of a shuttle. Their method of spinning was almost as simple as that of their weaving; they employed only a distaff and spindle, which they dexterously whirled round so as to twist the threads into a proper firmness. This is one of the clumsy methods of barbarous ages, which has been longer retained among polished people than perhaps any other. We have

have frequently seen it practised in England and Scotland, and believe it is still practised in various other parts of the world.


CHAP.
III.


IN countries where the arts are but in their infancy, every man is generally his own artificer. The men make the various instruments which they employ in their work, and the women make the cloth for covering themselves and their families: but in the days of Moses, the Israelites were advanced a few degrees beyond this state. Metallurgy seems to have made a considerable progress. In the time of Abraham, they had instruments for shearing their sheep; and swords, supposed to have been made of steel. They had even arrived to works of taste in gold and silver. They must therefore have been at this period more advanced in the arts, than the Greeks at the time of the siege of Troy, whose arms and shields were only made of copper; or than many savage nations at this time, whose arms are only hardened wood, sometimes pointed with flints, or bones of animals.

SUCH only is the imperfect account we are enabled to give of female employments in

CHAP. in the patriarchal ages. The account of
 III.  their amusements and diversions, if they
 Amuse- had any, is still more imperfect. Almost
 ments of in every period, and among every people,
 the wo- however wild and uncultivated, we find
 men of some rudiments of singing and dancing.
 antiquity Poems, containing the principal circumstan-
 but little ces of the history of their country, and the
 known. praise of their gods and heroes were in use
 among the ancient Phœnicians, Chinese,
 Greeks, Mexicans, &c. It is probable,
 therefore, that the ancient Israelitish women
 amused themselves with singing the songs of
 their poets; which, were chiefly composed
 either in praise of the Deity, to thank him
 for some remarkable deliverance, or of their
 heroes, to celebrate their valorous atchieve-
 ments. And that these poems were not
 always composed, nor always sung, by the
 men only, appears evident from the song of
 Barak and Deborah, handed down to us by
 Moses. Jubal, the brother of Tubal Cain,
 had long before this time invented musical
 instruments. It is not therefore improbable,
 that the Israelitish women accompanied their
 songs with instrumental music; a custom
 we often meet with in early ages, and among
 uncultivated people.

BESIDES

BESIDES the recital of songs and poems, C H A P.
III.
 we may reckon dancing among the female 
 diversions of the times we are reviewing. David danced before the ark of the Lord;
 and we find old Barzilai bewailing his incapacity for that exercise, in a manner that
 shewed how much it was the favourite, and perhaps the religious, amusement of the times
 in which he lived. As women are generally at all times, and particularly while in the
 bloom of youth more addicted to the sportive amusements, than men; it is highly probable,
 that they did not sit inactive spectators of a diversion so much in use. On some
 festival occasions, especially sheep-sheering, we have the strongest reasons to believe,
 that there were promiscuous meetings, where both sexes rejoiced, made merry, and
 probably danced together. Dancing is perhaps not less ancient than songs, nor less practised
 by savage nations, over whom music has commonly a power, to which even the most
 delicate Italian ear is a stranger. It elevates them to extacy, and often prompts them
 to exert themselves till they fall down breathless. Even the wretches who, in America,
 smart under the rod of European slavery, though so dispirited, as in appearance

CHAP.
III. pearance to have bid an eternal farewell
 to happiness and pleasure, start up at the power of music, and dance as if their bodies were strangers to pain; and their hearts to sorrow.

Theatri-
cal enter-
tainments
and
games of
chance
not
known.

In the times we are considering, games of chance were not known; and even in the days of Solomon, who with an unheard of degree of magnificence and libertinism had indulged himself in every vanity, and in every pleasure, neither games nor theatrical entertainments seem to have been introduced. If we may credit the commentators on the Talmud, all kinds of games and spectacles were not only forbid, but abhorred by every good Israelite, on account of the judgments which had fallen upon those Jews who had ventured to be present at them, when exhibited among the neighbouring nations. The comment on the book of Ruth introduces old Naomi dissuading her daughter-in-law from returning into the land of Israel, *because women were not there allowed to go to the theatres, as among the Gentiles.* The Jewish comment on the Lamentations of Jeremiah, introduces the church of that people expostulating with God, that she had

never

never indulged herself in entering into such prophane places; and the Talmud itself expressly forbids the seed of Abraham from entering into them, upon any pretence whatsoever.

CHAP.
III.



ON this, and some other accounts, it would seem, that the recreations of the women, in the times we are speaking of, were but few and simple. Perhaps one of the most common was, regaling themselves in the open air, under the vine, and under the fig-tree, a custom as ancient as Abraham, and at this day almost the only amusement practised in the East; where the heat of the climate disposes more to relaxation in the shade, than to the sportive diversions used by the active inhabitants of colder regions.

WE are informed by Herodotus, that in Egypt the employments of the women, like most of the other customs of that people, were totally different from what they were in other countries, that they were occupied abroad in trade, merchandise, and agriculture, and left all the domestic employments and cares to their men. We are, however, rather of opinion, that this was not strictly


CHAP.
III.



the case. The mercantile caravans, which travelled in places so rude and inhospitable as the neighbourhood of Egypt, were probably not composed of women. The fine linen, for which Egypt was so remarkable, was probably not spun by men, who seem by nature to have an abhorrence at the distaff. But as the manner in which the Egyptians divided the employments of life between the two sexes, is by the disagreement of authors involved in so much doubt and obscurity, at a period so distant, we cannot pretend to throw any light upon the subject.

Egyptian
women,
their
amuse-
ments.

FROM some fragments of ancient history it would seem, that the public amusements and diversions of the Egyptians were only a kind of religious festivals, which they celebrated with singing, dancing, feasting, and pompous processions; in which the women acted a principal part, and being adorned with a variety of flowers and garlands, carried in their hands things symbolical of the festival they were celebrating. Besides the joining in these public processions, women of distinction used to keep their birth-days with feasting and rejoicing. On the birth-day

day of a queen, or a princess of Egypt, CHAP.
III.
 the whole court was treated in a magnifi- 
 cent manner, and paid its compliments to
 the lady on whose account it was assembled.
 Great men followed the example of their
 prince, called together their friends and de-
 pendants, and spent the birth-days of their
 wives and daughters in mirth and festivity.
 With regard to the private amusements of
 the Egyptian women, history is entirely
 silent. It is probable, however, that among
 a people so highly cultivated, they were not
 altogether without some of these sportive
 diversions, which tend to invigorate the
 body by unbending the mind.

WHEN we turn from the Egyptians to the
 other nations of antiquity, we only meet
 with a few scattered hints concerning the
 manner in which women employed or a-
 mused themselves. The Phœnician women,
 whose husbands were famous for trade and
 navigation, are said to have spent much of
 their time in writing and keeping of these
 accounts, without which trade cannot be
 properly managed. The Lydians addicted
 themselves so much to labour, that at the
 building of the famous sepulchre of Alyates,
 they

Employ-
 ments of
 the wo-
 men of
 some
 other na-
 tion:.

CHAP.
III.

they performed more of the work than the men, and the sepulchre being finished, an inscription was fixed upon it, to signify this to posterity. The Lybian women, warlike as their husbands, dedicated a great part of their time to feats of military prowess. One tribe of them annually celebrated a festival in honour of Minerva, in which the unmarried being divided into two parties, fought with sticks and stones, till one of the parties was defeated. As this battle was fought in honour of the goddess, they imagined that all the wounds received in it, were so much under her peculiar care, that she would suffer none to die of them, but those who had forfeited their title to her favour, by the loss of their virginity. It is probable that these wounds were seldom so dangerous as to become mortal, and when they were, it was easy to condemn the unhappy sufferer, who could not rise from the dead to vindicate her injured reputation. Thus though we only consider this institution as a piece of state policy, it was excellently calculated to preserve chastity. Not to join in the engagement was a tacit acknowledgment of unchastity. To be wounded in it was considered as bringing certain death upon her who

who was unchaste. Few women, therefore, would risque themselves, who were conscious of being guilty; few women would dare to be guilty, when it was reckoned so impossible to avoid a discovery.

CHAP.
III.

IN what manner the women of the Syrians, Babylonians, Medes, and Persians, who are almost the only nations which make any figure in the periods we are reviewing, were employed, is nearly all conjecture. We may, however, venture to affirm, that among the opulent they were not put to any servile or laborious tasks; as such would have been altogether inconsistent with the delicacy in which they were brought up, and the extraordinary finery with which they were decorated. As the Babylonians were famous for their manufactures of rich embroidery, sumptuous vestments, fine linen, magnificent carpets and hangings; and as weaving, embroidery, and other works of the like nature, were a principal part of the occupation of the women of antiquity, we may reasonably conjecture, that the Babylonish women were employed in this manner, as well as in preparing that finery with which they ornamented their persons.

We

G A H P.
III.



We have reason also to suppose, that in nations so rich and luxurious as those we have mentioned, where the sex were brought up in the lap of ease and indulgence, they would have several public as well as private amusements; but what these were, or how they were conducted history has not informed us. We are told, that the Babylonians had a great variety of musical instruments; and as music is a recreation well adapted to the sentimental feelings of the female heart, it is probable, their women did not neglect it. The Medes and Persians were also famous for music and dancing. Music, among them, was called in to heighten the pleasure of the festive board; at which the guests sung and played upon instruments, the monarchs themselves sometimes taking a part in this, as well as in every other thing which promoted mirth and jollity. We are inclined to believe, it was the Medes and Persians who first introduced the custom of bringing in singing and dancing women, in order to divert a company.

Of subsequent
periods.

AMONG the nations which have been hitherto mentioned, we could do little more than observe in general, that such was the employ-

employment, and such the amusement of the fair sex. Descending to periods less remote, we meet with descriptions more particular. In the Lesser Asia, where it would seem that women were far from being so much despised and neglected, as in many other parts of the world, even those of the first quality were not ashamed to perform the office of a washerwoman. We shall afterwards have occasion to take notice of the same custom in Greece. The Grecian wives and daughters, of whatever quality, were not, in the heroic ages, brought up in idleness. Penelope, queen of the famous Ulysses, is so frequently introduced by Homer at her loom, that almost every one has heard the story of Penelope's web; a story which has been frequently applied to the slow and thriftless operations of the women of our modern times. The famous Helen, while confined by the besiegers of Troy, employed herself in an extraordinary piece of embroidery, which represented most of the battles fought between the Greeks and Trojans. And Andromache, when she heard of the death of Hector, embroidered and adorned with flowers, a representation of that tragical scene. But such soft employ-

CHAP.
III.



ments, such works of taste, were not the sole occupation of the women in the times we are delineating. The same Andromache, who with her needle painted the fall of the hero of her country, was not ashamed to feed, and take care of his horses.

BESIDES the arts of weaving and embroidery, the Grecian fair ones employed themselves in spinning, which they performed standing, and in every other branch of the manufacture of cloth; a custom which was not obliterated even when their country flourished in its most distinguished splendour: for Alexander the Great, and many others of their heroes and statesmen, wore garments, spun and woven by their wives and sisters. The Greek women had particular rooms allotted to their work, near the apartments where they lodged. When they were respected by their husbands, and not given to intrigue, the providing and managing of all necessaries within doors were also committed to them, and constituted another part of their domestic occupation.

As the Greek ladies were almost constantly employed, and, as employment often banishes

banishes all thoughts of pleasure and dissipation, we have reason to believe that they had few, if any, private diversions or amusements; which are generally the offspring of idleness; a truth which plainly appears from the difference, in this respect, between their women and their men; the former, as we have observed, being constantly employed, had no need of amusements; the latter being frequently, and, in Sparta, even by law obliged to be constantly idle, were thereby induced to have recourse to games and sports of various kinds to fill up their vacant hours, and prevent that uncomfortable tedium which so generally attends inactivity. To some of these public sports the women were admitted, and from others excluded by the severest penalties. Their legislator possibly imagined, that should they be indiscriminately admitted to all the amusements of the men, they would acquire an unsuitable boldness, and contracting a fondness for pleasure and dissipation, neglect the several duties and offices required of them at home. The Spartan women were in this respect much more indulged, we have already seen, that they amused themselves with the masculine exercises of wrestling, throwing

CHAP:
III.Of the
Greek
women.

CHAP.
III.


~~~~ darts, &c. But this is not all: they were obliged to appear naked at some of their solemn feasts and sacrifices, and to dance and sing, while the young men stood in a circle around them; an amusement highly indelicate, or, if a religious ceremony, only worthy of the Cyprian goddess.

IN the heroic ages, while the Greeks found abundance of employment in procuring subsistence, in plundering their neighbours, or avenging their own private quarrels; they had but few gods, and, hardly, perhaps, any festivals besides that of the vintage, at which they used to make merry together with the fruits they had gathered. When their manners acquired a greater refinement, when they became idle, by devolving all their labour upon slaves, and their gods had increased almost to the number of their men, the festivals celebrated in honour of them became also nearly innumerable, and were many of them accompanied with dancings, revellings, pompous processions, and other ostentatious ceremonies: into almost all of them the women were not only admitted, but in several of them acted a principal part, as singers, dancers, priestesses, &c. When, therefore,

therefore, the institutions of a religion are in this manner, more calculated to attract the eye, than to amend the heart; when, instead of social and moral duties, they prescribe gaudy processions, and ostentatious ceremonies; these in a great measure supply, and are actually turned into public diversions and amusements. This seems to have been remarkably the case in Greece; where, though every one of their numerous festivals was instituted in honour of some god, or in commemoration of something which they fancied was connected with religion, they often lost sight of the original institution amid the glare of ostentatious ceremony with which it was celebrated.

CHAP.  
III.

BUT though many of the Greek festivals at which the women assisted, were either so obscene or ridiculous, as not to deserve our attention; there was one mentioned by Athenæus, which we cannot pass over in silence; it seems to have been instituted to give the fair sex an opportunity of avenging themselves upon all those who had neglected them. At the celebration of it, they were impowered to lay hold on all the old bachelors

CHAP. bachelors they could find, to drag them  
 III.  round an altar, and beat them all the time they were doing so, with their fists.

WHEREVER women are advanced a few degrees above the most abject slavery, they naturally endeavour to attract the attention of our sex, by giving their personal charms all the additional advantages of ornament and dress. In states polished to excess, so solicitous are they to please, and so anxious to be taken notice of, that their whole attention seems engrossed about personal decorations. These ideas are however only the children of idleness and affluence, and are seldom or never to be met with in states and kingdoms during their infancy. In the infancy of Rome, Tanaquil, the queen of Tarquin, had public honours conferred upon her, not for her elegance in dressing, but for the use she had made of her distaff; and Lucretia, whose tragical story is so well known in the Roman history, when her husband and some friends with him, unexpectedly arrived from the army in the middle of the night, was found with her maids spinning and working in wool. The general practice



practice of this period, as well among the Romans as the Greeks and other nations, was, that the women manufactured all the cloaths used by their husbands and families; not thinking the useful and necessary arts of life, so incompatible with elegance and grandeur as they began to do afterwards, and as they unfortunately do still in our modern times. In subsequent periods, when luxury, with its numerous train of attending evils, had crept into Rome, the women became by degrees less useful, and ceased to be employed in proportion as they were diverted and amused.

HISTORY, so far as we know, has not acquainted us, whether the Roman ladies had any private diversions: their public ones were such as were common to both sexes; as bathing, theatrical representations, horse-races, shows of wild beasts which fought against one another; and sometimes against men, whom the emperors in the plenitude of their despotic power ordered to engage them. Naval battles, and gladiators hacking one another to pieces. The Romans, of both sexes, spent a great deal of time at the baths; which at first, perhaps, were inter-

CHAP. interwoven with their religion, at last, were  
III. only considered as refinements in luxury;  
they were places of public resort, where  
all the news of the times were to be heard,  
where people met with their acquaintances  
and friends, where public libraries were kept  
for such as chose to read, and where poets  
recited their works to such as had patience  
to hear. In the earlier periods of Rome,  
separate baths were appropriated to each  
sex; but luxury beginning by degrees to  
thrust out decency, the men and women at  
last bathed promiscuously together; the men,  
however, being dressed and undressed by  
the men; and the women, following the  
example, by those of their own sex also.  
The emperor Adrian prohibited this inde-  
cent manner of bathing, and re-established  
the separate baths. Inclination, by degrees,  
overcame the prohibition, Marcus Aurelius  
renewed it. Heliogabalus, the patron of  
gluttony and indecorum, formally abolished  
it; and it was again renewed under Alex-  
ander Severus. But debauchery was by  
this time become too powerful to be re-  
strained by law; and in spite of every effort,  
promiscuous bathing continued till the  
time of Constantine; who by the coercive  
force

force of the legislative authority, and the rewards and terrors of the christian religion, at last finally banished it. There were likewise at Rome, public walks, planted on each side with rows of trees, as in modern times; to which both sexes resorted in the evenings, for exercise and amusement. The emperors sometimes also gave lotteries; in which the women had tickets, that entitled them to prizes. In short, so much did the Roman women recede from the custom of antiquity, in mixing themselves with the men, that at last there was hardly an amusement, a business, or debauchery, in which they were not engaged, either as parties or spectators.


CHAP.  
III.

## C H A P. IV.

*The same Subject continued.*C H A P.  
IV.

THE various individuals which compose the human genus, though in many respects exactly similar in all ages and countries, in others are so dissimilar, that they can hardly be considered as stamped with the same character, or endowed with the same feelings. Their similarity is in all times and places the effect of nature; their dissimilarity the effect of art, and of the habits and customs which have arisen from it; these every where govern and direct more than one half of their thoughts and actions, lay them under obligations stronger than the laws of their country; and in many cases obliterate even what nature had planted. Such was the case with the Roman women at the public baths; such is the case at present in Russia, and many other parts of the world; where female modesty not only gives place to custom, but, by custom, is in time entirely eradicated.

W H E N

WHEN we turn from the Romans to- C H A P.  
IV.  
wards these people, who afterwards sub-   
dued their empire, we see them, though  
by the Romans denominated barbarians, in  
many circumstances, less deserving of that  
contemptible epithet than these insolent de-  
populators of the world themselves. We  
see their women placing no small share of  
female excellence in the exercise of the do-  
mestic, and still more in that of the conjugal  
virtues. We discover that their mothers had  
early instilled into their minds that modesty,  
which more than any ornament adorned;  
and that frugality and industry, which main-  
tained and supported them, though little  
assisted by their men, and still less by the  
fruitfulness of their country. Their em-  
ployment was not only to take care of, and  
manage all the domestic concerns of the  
family, but also to provide whatever could  
be obtained by peaceful industry; for their  
husbands unwilling to concern themselves  
in any thing but war and hunting, left every  
thing else to the conduct and direction of  
their wives.

THE Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and per-  
haps every other northern people, deemed


CHAP.  
IV.



agriculture an ignoble profession; only fit for slaves and women; even the Visigoths, on the coasts of Spain, devolved the care of their flocks, and the culture of their fields on their women; but they encouraged them to support the fatigue of these employments, by establishing annual assemblies, in which those who most distinguished themselves, received the thanks of the public. The men, in all these nations, counted it only glorious to live by the sword and the bow, and consequently, when not engaged in war, or in the chase, sunk into slothful indolence; and could only be said to live, because they ate, drunk, and moved. Every necessary work being thus left to the women, they were perhaps so fully employed as to have no time for any thing else; if they had any diversions or amusements, we have no account of them, as they had no historians, and as those of other nations were but imperfectly acquainted with their manners,

Eastern  
women,  
how em-  
ployed.

WE shall afterwards have occasion to relate, that the far greater part of the female sex in Asia, Africa, and America, are in a state of the most abject slavery, and employed only in the execution of every slavish  
and

and laborious task. We shall not therefore CHAP.  
IV.  
now take up the dismal tale, but content  ourselves with mentioning a few particulars only, and these chiefly such as relate to women, who are the least exposed to feel the oppressive effects of despotism. The Hindoo women, the Mahometans of Bengal, Nagarcut, Lahor, and several other places of the East, are, in general, not so much oppressed by slavery, as in many parts of Africa and America; because, in Asia, they are considered only as an article of delicacy and pleasure; in Africa and America, only as the slaves of their lords, and the instruments of population. To the women of Hindostan, we owe a great part of these works of taste so elegantly executed on the manufactures of the East; the beautiful colourings and exquisite designings of their printed cottons; all the embroidery, and a part of that filligree work, which so much exceeds any thing in Europe. The deficiency of taste therefore, with which we so commonly charge them, does not seem to be so much a defect of nature as of education. Brought up in luxurious indolence, excluded from all the busy scenes of life, and like children provided with all those things,

CHAP.  
IV.

things, the acquisition of which calls forth the powers of the mind and body, they seldom have any motive to exert themselves; but when such a motive exists, they have often exhibited the most convincing proofs of their ability.

SUCH are the female employments of the East; they are nearly the same among the Turks now settled in Europe. Every Turkish seraglio and haram, has a garden adjoining to it, and in the middle of this garden a large room, more or less decorated, according to the wealth of the proprietor; here the ladies spend most of their time with their attendant nymphs around them, employed at their music, embroidery, or loom; nor should we wonder, if in these retreats they find more real pleasure and enjoyment, than in the unbounded freedom of Europe, where love, interest, and ambition, so often destroy their peace; and where scandal, with her envenomed shafts, too often strikes equally at guilt and innocence,

Luxurious  
amuse-  
ments.

So little do the writers of voyages and travels know what passes in the penetralia of the harams of the East, and so private are



are these recesses kept, even from the eye of speculative intrusion, that our knowledge of them is exceedingly imperfect: this only in general seems certain, that it has long been a custom among the grandees of Asia, to entertain story-tellers of both sexes, who like the Scalds and Bards of ancient Europe, divert them with tales, and little histories, mostly on the subject of bravery and love. These often amuse the women and beguile the cheerless hours of the haram, by calling up images to their minds, which their eyes are for ever debarred from seeing. All their other amusements as well as this, are indolently voluptuous, a great part of their time being spent lolling on silken sofas, while a train of female slaves, scarcely less voluptuous, attend to sing to them, to fan them, and to rub their bodies; an exercise which the easterns enjoy with a sort of placid extacy, as it promotes the circulation of their languid blood. They likewise dedicate many of their hours to bathing in rose-water, and other baths, prepared with the precious odours of the East, to perfuming themselves with costly essences, adorning their persons, solicitous by every method to attract the attention, and obtain the greatest

CHAP. greatest share of the affection of their Tyrant  
 IV. Lord. Public amusements they have none,  
 ~~~~~ as these would necessarily expose them to be  
 seen; a circumstance, which, through cus-
 tom, the women themselves seem little less
 afraid of than the jealous tyrants who con-
 fine them.

IN the empire of the Mogul, the women are often called into the apartments of the men after supper, where they spend the remainder of the evening in conversation, in regaling themselves with betel*, and with tasting the liquors of the country; but in these cases they are constantly veiled; and to attempt to unveil, or even to touch one of them, would be considered as the greatest rudeness; and perhaps punished with immediate stabbing. At court they are frequently admitted into a gallery, with a curtain before them, through which, without being seen, they can see and hear whatever passes. It has sometimes happened that the throne has been occupied by a woman, who never

* Betel is a root, which the Easterns make use of as the Europeans do tobacco; it is chewed by all ranks, and by men, women, and children.

appearing

appearing in open court, issued her imperial mandates from behind this curtain; like an invisible being producing the greatest effects, while the cause of them was wrapt in darkness and obscurity.

CHAP.
IV.



IN most places of the Levant, and at Constantinople, where the inhabitants still retain the manners of the Asiatics, fond of indolent amusements, they chuse out in the evening a green spot, in some thick shade, in which they spread a carpet; and sitting down cross-legged together, men and women upon it, divert themselves with drinking coffee and sherbet, while their female slaves attend round them to play, sing, or dance, as they shall direct; the mistress or lady, of the first quality in the party, often leading the dance, in the same manner as Diana is said to have done with her Nymphs on the banks of the Eurotas. But though women of rank, at Constantinople, may lead off a dance, such does not seem to be the general practice of the Asiatics, from whom they are descended. It is true, the Mogul emperors, and some of the Arabian chiefs, often make their wives and concubines dance before them; but this is not a

Dancing;
an amuse-
ment in
many
places.

CHAP.
IV.

perfumed, soon after begin to be in the same state. Their dances are in general expressive of the passion of love; and so exquisite is their beauty, so voluptuous their figure, so rich and ingeniously contrived their dress, that they seldom perform without drawing together a numerous crowd of spectators.

STROLLING female dancers, who live by that profession, are not, however, peculiar to the East Indies; they have of late been met with in Otaheite, and several of the adjacent islands; but besides their strolling dancers in Otaheite, they have a dance called *Timoradee*, which the young girls perform, whenever eight or ten of them can be got together. In polite countries it would be reckoned highly indecent, in these islands decency seems not yet to have received a name. But though this diversion is allowed to the virgin, it is prohibited to the wife; who, from the moment of marriage, must abstain from it for ever,

THAT such women as have rather been the outcasts of fortune, and are consequently obliged to exert themselves, in order to gain a subsistence, should make dancing a profession,

feſſion, and exhibit their performances for money, has nothing in it extraordinary; but that both men and women, who reckon themſelves ſo far above want, as to be aſhamed to perform for hire, ſhould become ſtrolling dancers from choice, in ſome degree excites our aſtoniſhment, as being perfectly inconſiſtent with the ideas which we entertain in Europe. Such, however, in the iſland of Ulietea, were met with by Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander; they were the grandees of the iſland, and travelled from one part of it to another, gratuitouſly entertaining all who choſe to be ſpectators, with their ſkill and dexterity in the art they profeſſed.

CHAP.
IV.



FROM the earlieſt ages, dancing appears to have been either a religious or an imitative exerciſe; David danced before the ark of the Lord, the Philiftines danced before Dagon, many of the contemporary nations frequently danced at their ſolemn meetings, in their groves, and on their high places; the Greeks danced at ſome of the feſtivals celebrated in honour of their gods; the Romans had a particular kind of dancing prieſts called *Salii*, who were dedicated to the

Thoughts
on
dancing.

CHAP.
IV.

the service of Mars, and performed in the streets on the festivals sacred to that Deity; and the travellers of our own times give us numberless accounts of the dancings of the savages before their idols. So different, however, are the ideas we have formed of religion, that we are apt to consider dancing as altogether inconsistent with its solemnity; but, perhaps, those who thought otherwise, introduced it as a sign of gratitude and thankfulness, for health, vigour, and agility; and, to show the gods, that they were cheerful and happy in the enjoyment of the blessings they bestowed, and under the administration of their government. Proceeding from such sentiments in the worshippers, it could not be to the gods an unacceptable service. Dancing has likewise been much used in an imitative or symbolical manner. The Indians dance their war-dance, to shew the strength, the agility, and ferocity they can exert in battle; the women we have mentioned dance, what may be called their love-dance, in order to excite that passion in the breasts of the spectators; and it is only in the polite countries of Europe that we dance purely for the sake of dancing. If rude and barbarous nations make their dances

dances expressive of their employments and their feelings; it is worth considering, whether we might not improve on the plan, and add sentiment and expression to what we at present only look upon as frolic and amusement.

CHAP.
IV.



THEY have also in the East, the amusement of bathing; an amusement so closely interwoven with their religion as well as with their pastime, that we can hardly say to which of them it belongs. In warm countries, where cleanliness is so absolutely necessary to the health and sweetness of the body, as almost to deserve a place among the moral virtues; there is scarcely a religious system into which frequent bathing has not been introduced, as a ceremony without which the gods would not accept the prayers and sacrifices of men; hence both sexes are there more accustomed to bathe, than in colder ones where religion has not enjoined any such duty. But there are in the East other causes, which perhaps even more forcibly prompt to the use of the bath than religion itself. The first is inclination, which must operate in the strongest manner in climates sparingly supplied with water,

Bathing,
an amusement in
the East.

CHAP.
IV.

water, and scorched by a vertical sun. The second is the love of liberty. Every bathing-place set apart for the use of the women is a kind of public rendezvous, where the sex in general meet to talk over the news, the scandal, and the fashions; a sacred asylum, where no man dare enter, and where women are consequently free from the tyranny of their husbands and guardians; on these accounts, we are not to wonder that bathing is so much practised by the fair sex in the East, who have hardly any other liberty than that which they enjoy on this occasion.

WE have already mentioned the indelicate manner in which the Greeks and Romans of both sexes bathed promiscuously together. To this indelicacy we shall oppose the practice of the Turkish Ladies at Adrianople, as related by lady Mary Wortley Montague. “ I went, says she, to the bagnio about ten o’clock; it was already full of women, I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding-dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them, yet there was not one of them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility

CHAP.
IV.

“ civility possible. I know no European
 “ court where the ladies would have behaved
 “ themselves in so polite a manner to such
 “ a stranger: I believe there were two hun-
 “ dred women, and yet none of those dis-
 “ dainful smiles and satirical whispers that
 “ never fail in our assemblies, when any body
 “ appears that is not dressed exactly in the
 “ fashion; they repeated over and over to
 “ me, *charming*, very *charming*; the first
 “ sofas were covered with cushions and
 “ rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and
 “ on the second their slaves, behind them,
 “ but without any distinction of rank by
 “ their dress, all being in the state of nature;
 “ that is, in plain English, stark naked, with-
 “ out any beauty or defect concealed; yet
 “ there was not the least wanton smile, or
 “ immodest gesture among them. They
 “ walked and moved with the same majestic
 “ grace which Milton describes our general
 “ mother with; there were many among
 “ them as exactly proportioned as ever any
 “ goddess was drawn by the pencil of a
 “ Guido or a Titian---and most of their
 “ skins shiningly white, only adorned by
 “ their beautiful hair divided into many
 “ tresses, hanging on their shoulders,
 Vol. I. S “ braided

CHAP. "braided, either with pearl or ribbon,
 IV. "perfectly representing the figures of the
 "graces.

"I WAS here convinced of the truth of a
 "reflection I have often made, that if it
 "were a fashion to go naked, the face would
 "hardly be observed. I perceived that the
 "ladies of the most delicate skin and finest
 "shapes, had the greatest share of my admi-
 "ration, though their faces were sometimes
 "less beautiful than those of their compani-
 "ons; to tell you the truth, I had wickedness
 "enough to wish secretly that Mr. Gervais
 "could have been there invisible; I fancy
 "it would have much improved his art, to
 "see so many fine women naked, in different
 "postures, some in conversation, some work-
 "ing, others drinking coffee or sherbet; and
 "many, negligently lying on their cushions,
 "while their slaves (generally pretty girls
 "of seventeen or eighteen) were employed
 "in braiding their hair in several pretty fan-
 "cies.---They generally take this diversion
 "once a week, and stay there at least four
 "or five hours without getting cold, by im-
 "mediate coming out of the hot bath into
 "the cool room.---I was charmed with their
 "civility

“ civility and beauty, and should have been
 “ very glad to pass more time with them,
 “ but was in haste to see the ruins of Justi-
 “ nian’s church, which did not afford me so
 “ agreeable a prospect as I had left, being
 “ little more than a heap of stones.”

CHAP.
IV.




THE savages in America frequently allot to their women tasks which may be more properly denominated slavery than employment; but as we shall have occasion to mention these afterward, we at present only observe in general, that as soon as the snow is melted, the American women assemble in the fields, and scratch over the surface of the ground with sticks made on purpose; after which they sow their maize or whatever grain they mean to cultivate. In the harvest, the men sometimes condescend to help them to gather in the crop, but such help is considered as a favour which the women have no right to demand; and which the men seldom mean to grant them. As opulence and idleness must conspire to give birth to sportive amusements; we are not to wonder that the American women are not acquainted with them; their time, therefore, is not spent in gazing on ostentatious shows,

CHAP. IV. in fluttering among giddy company, nor is
 ~~~~~ it feloniously stolen from them by the delu-  
 sive hopes of a gaming table; but for all  
 this, they are not entirely destitute of re-  
 creation, in which they blend the useful and  
 the amusing together. They paint little  
 cups of wood, embroider the skins of roe-  
 bucks, dye porcupines bristles, and work  
 them into various figures upon slippers and  
 baskets; displaying upon the whole, a taste  
 and ingenuity which do credit to the rude  
 and unlettered mind.

Of Euro-  
 pean wo-  
 men.

As the amusements of women have been  
 but few, and their employments little diver-  
 sified in the countries we have already sur-  
 veyed, we now proceed to take a view of  
 Europe; where, though we may not perhaps  
 be able to find the scene of female employ-  
 ments enlarged according to our wishes, we  
 shall at least find a long and ample list of  
 female diversions and amusements.---If by  
 employment we understand being occupied  
 in such things as are useful to society, in  
 that case, women of rank and quality, in most  
 of the polite countries of Europe, may be  
 struck entirely out, as having no employ-  
 ment at all; and should we even admit  
 works

works of fancy and taste into our list of CHAP.  
IV.  
useful employments, such is the love of   
dissipation, that even few of these are at  
present executed by ladies of fashion. De-  
scending from the most elevated ranks of  
female life, to those placed in a middle sta-  
tion, who neither have reason to be uplifted  
with the pride of wealth, made giddy with  
the glare of preferment, nor depressed by  
the pinching hand of poverty; such we  
should naturally expect to find employed so  
as to be useful to themselves and to their  
families; and such, we could heartily wish  
the impartiality of historians would allow  
us to paint them. But even in this most  
eligible of all human conditions, where their  
time is not devoured by the giddy vortex of  
pomp and ceremony, where it is not wrested  
from them by the labours necessary to pro-  
cure daily bread; to what is it dedicated?  
seldom! we are afraid, to useful purposes;  
but, rather to copying the examples of the  
superior ranks, and to gadding abroad after  
every fashionable folly and amusement. Nor  
in saying this have we acted the part of de-  
claimers; the portrait we have drawn is only  
too faithful a representation of the times,  
and naturally points out to us that we are  
to

CHAP.  
IV.

to look for the useful and the beneficial, only among such women as are obliged to gain a subsistence for themselves, and perhaps for their children, by their own industry.

BUT to return to our ladies of rank and fashion, there are still several to be found among them, who bestow no inconsiderable share of time and attention on the concerns of their families, and the cultivation of the fine arts. To run through the long and varied list of occupations, in which women of the middling and lower conditions of life employ themselves, for pleasure, or for profit, would be tedious to our female readers, who know them much better than we do; we shall therefore only observe in general, that, in all the polite countries of Europe, the proper office of women of middling fortune is the care, inspection, and management of every thing belonging to the family, while that of the men is to provide by their labour and industry what the women are to manage with care and frugality. When we descend to the lower and more useful classes of women, who not having been cast into the lap of fortune, are obliged to work that they may live; we find their employments various

various and extensive. Most of the manu-  
factures in Europe, which do not depend so  
much upon strength as upon delicacy, are  
in a great measure carried on by women,  
and many of those which are even of a  
rougher kind, receive a last polish from their  
softer touch. It is to their patient industry  
and unwearied application that we owe our  
finest linens, cambrics, and lawns; it is to  
them also that we are indebted for a great  
part of our gold and silver laces, our em-  
broideries, and a variety of other works of  
taste and elegance, too tedious to mention.  
Another part of them, employ themselves  
in assisting the husbandman in a variety of  
the less laborious branches of agriculture;  
and, not a few there are, who even toil in  
reaping and gathering in the harvest: but  
what we ought to value above every thing,  
is that cleanness, which by their means we  
enjoy in our houses and cloaths; benefits  
which we could hardly, or at least, auk-  
wardly, procure for ourselves.

It may perhaps be thought strange, that  
in describing the various employments of  
women, we have not hitherto mentioned  
that which of all others is their most natural  
and

CHAP.  
IV.

C H A P.  
IV.

Nursing  
of child-  
ren the  
natural  
employ-  
ment of  
women.

and common office, the nursing and bringing up of children; a subject which we reserved entirely for this place, that we might not be under the necessity of so frequent a repetition, as we should have been otherwise led to by its occurring in every period, and in every country we have had occasion to mention.

THE most tender care and anxious solicitude for their infant offspring, is an innate idea throughout the wide extent of the animal creation, much more strongly imprinted on the minds of females than of males. A wise institution of Providence, for which various reasons will easily occur to the intelligent reader, and which we need not therefore take the trouble of pointing out.

A MODERATE attention to the nature and œconomy of the brute animals will convince us, that the care of their young arises from this innate principle, and is not the effect of reasoning; but we shall be still more convinced of this, if we attentively consider the females of the human genus, in savage and in civil life; a consideration which will uniformly point out to us, that this innate

care



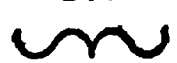
care and anxious sollicitude, diminish gradually, in proportion as women advance more toward that perfection, or rather imperfection of politeness; where folly, fashion, and the love of pleasure, so much engross the affections, as in most cases greatly to weaken, and in some totally to obliterate, a passion hardly less natural than that of self-preservation.

CHAP.  
IV.



THAT women were, as well as other animals, intended by nature to nurse and bring up their own children, is a truth which we presume nobody will deny; hence rigid philosophers, in dogmatizing on this subject, have frequently branded such of the sex as did otherwise, with every indignant epithet; never considering that ill-humour, particularly when exerted against a woman, seldom serves to reclaim; nor, that nature in many cases seems to have left something for art to improve upon. Instead therefore of exclamation, let us view this matter impartially, and we shall find, that nature gave to horses tails: convenience directs us to cut them: she gave to men hair and beards, but we reckon it no crime to crop the one and shave the other: she gave to women breasts, and

Consider-  
ations on  
nursing.

CHAP.  
IV.

furnished them with milk, but that they should be thereby constantly obliged to suckle their children, would be almost as whimsical as that we should be obliged to let our hair and our beards remain in a state of nature; especially as it now appears, by many repeated trials, that children can in some cases be brought up better by the milk of another woman than by that of the mother, and that they frequently do exceedingly well without any milk at all. Every thing else therefore being equal, we are of opinion that there is no such preference due to the milk of the mother, as physicians and philosophers would willingly make us believe; nor can they from experience, the only sure guide in such enquiries, deduce any such inference. All young animals, we imagine, may naturally thrive best upon the milk of animals of the same species, but to carry this idea to individuals, is giving a limited and narrow view of the operations of nature, and we might almost with an equal degree of credibilty suppose, that a young plant could no where grow so well as in the same hot-bed which nourished its parent, as that a child could not thrive as well by the milk of any healthful woman, as by that of its mother.

To

To suppose, therefore, that a child does not equally thrive by good milk from any other person, is establishing a specific quality in the milk of every mother, adapted to the constitution of her own child only; and putting the important business of rearing children on such a footing, that when the mother chances to die, the poor infant must either expire soon after, or, at best, live a feeble monument of improper nourishment; and so perpetually point out a blunder in the constitution of nature. Nor do the young of the human species only, thrive equally on the milk of the species; it is the same with the young of all other animals; at least of the domestic animals with which we are acquainted. The calf and the lamb do just as well when they suck another cow or ewe, as when they suck the dam which brought them forth; provided the animals be healthy, and the quantity of milk sufficient to maintain the young ones committed to their care; nay, we have never, in some of the best breeding counties of England, been able to observe any difference, if they had plenty of milk, whether they sucked it from the mother or drunk it from a pail.

CHAP.  
IV.



FROM these observations it appears, that what has hitherto been alleged of the mother's milk being the only proper nourishment for her own child, has been the mere vision of theory, and not the result of experience. We would not, however, on this account, endeavour to dissuade women from the most endearing task of nursing; we persuade ourselves, that it is in most cases their duty; and if their minds are not corrupted by pursuits less natural, we flatter ourselves, that, in all cases, they will find it their greatest pleasure; especially when they consider, that by so doing they have the pledges of their connubial love constantly under their own care and direction; whereby they are safe from the severity, carelessness, and inattention of the female mercenary, who is but seldom one of the best of her sex; such being, with difficulty, prevailed upon to quit the care of her own infant, for the sake of money, unless urged to it by lawless necessity.

THERE are a variety of other arguments, which offer themselves in favour of this practice; but as they have been so frequently mustered, by almost every author who has  
wrote

wrote on nursing, we shall not now intrude them on our fair readers. We cannot, however, quit the subject, without making one observation, which we do not recollect to have met with. In every place, where the practice of giving out children to nurse is common, the state is thereby a considerable loser; because it is the idle and wealthy only who can afford to give them out, and the poor only who are obliged to take them in; whence it evidently follows, that the number of the children of the rich is increased, and that of the poor decreased; for a woman, who sends her child to nurse as soon as it is born, has, or may have, a child every year; whereas she, who, after having suckled her own child, is obliged to take in another, cannot again bring forth a child in less than twenty-seven months, or perhaps three years. But a state is not so much enriched by the children of wealthy and independent parents, as by those of the poor; because the number required to govern and direct are few, in proportion to those who are to be governed and directed. May not this be one of the causes, why Great Britain sends abroad so many poor young gentlemen, resolutely determined to be rich? May it not also be one of

CHAR.  
IV.  


CHAP.  
IV.

of the causes; why, at home, she is sometimes at a loss for labourers, and often for able-bodied men to man her fleets and recruit her armies? May it not, in time, produce such an increase of children to the rich, and so much decrease those of the poor, that we may become like the Spaniards? almost all gentlemen; too proud to work, and too poor to be idle.

WERE we to judge from analogy, whether every woman should nurse her own children, we should find it to be a duty from which she could hardly exempt herself; as almost the whole of the birds and the beasts perform this task to their own young\*. Were we to judge from the history of man, we should find, that in almost all nations it has been the common practice; though to that practice, like all other general rules, there have been many exceptions. We have reason to believe, that the wives and concubines

\* The Ostrich and the Cuckow do not hatch their eggs, nor take care of their young. The Ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, and they are hatched by the sun. The Cuckow lays them in the nest of another bird, who, mistaking them for her own, hatches them, and rears the young.

of the patriarchs constantly suckled their own children; the same custom obtained among the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Scythians, the Medes and Persians; and it invariably takes place at this day in every nation, where culture has not degenerated into vice, and where the voice of nature is stronger than that of pleasure.

CHAP.  
IV.  
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WHAT at first gave rise to the custom of one woman suckling the child of another, must have been the death or sickness of the mother. Indolence taking the hint from this, and willing to be excused from the toil of tending and suckling, devolved the important offices on slaves and mercenaries. When, or where, this practice first crept into the world, history has not informed us; we discover it, however, to have been pretty general, during many of the most flourishing ages of the Grecian states. Nations and provinces are often distinguished for some productions of their soil, or qualification of their inhabitants; the Spartan matrons had acquired the glory of being famous for nursing; they laid aside the use of swaddling-bands; a custom which had prevailed from the remotest antiquity; they used children  
to

CHAP.  
IV.

to eat every sort of food; taught them not to be afraid when alone, or in the dark; and to relinquish those peevish and fretful humours, which often render them so troublesome and disagreeable. On these accounts, Spartan nurses were eagerly sought after, and hired by such as could afford them, into all the other states of Greece. Several of the most eminent warriors and statesmen gloried in having been nursed by the matrons of Sparta. As the Romans imitated the Greeks in almost all their manners and customs, as they became more alive to the feelings of luxury, and less to those of nature, they copied them also, in giving their infants to be suckled and taken care of by slaves and hired nurses, while they themselves rioted in all the pomp and extravagance of the richest and most extravagant city in the world.

WHEN the frozen regions of the North sent out swarms of barbarians into the empire of Rome, they overturned not only the whole system of Roman government, but also that of luxury and of pleasure. These being dissipated, nature resumed her feelings, and instigated the women again to  
apply



apply themselves to the task of suckling and rearing their own children. Several centuries elapsed amidst the depopulations of war, and marked by ferocity of manners; when these gave place to the arts of peace and cultivation, luxury, and the love of pleasure, began to creep in again, and women resumed the practice of putting their children to nurse, that they might have more time to bestow upon pleasure and amusement. The French and Italians, who have always taken the lead in fashion, set the first example; they were soon followed by the British, and other neighbouring nations, with such exactness, that, at present, there is scarcely to be found in Europe, a woman of family and fashion who will take the trouble of nursing her own child; but happy were it, if the contagion ended among these, and did not spread itself to the middling ranks of life; who, fond of imitating their superiors, relinquish likewise the task of nursing, on various pretensions, that, like those superiors, they may dedicate themselves more freely to the rage of pleasure.

SUCH are the present employments of the sex; but employment is not the mode of the

CHAP.  
IV.

Amuse-  
ments  
and me-  
thods of  
killing  
time in  
Europe.

times. In all the polite countries of Europe, women of rank and fashion, as well as those in middling circumstances, with a large portion of idle time upon their hands, with an almost irresistible inclination to pleasure in whatever form it offers itself, are more often to be met with at the shrine of amusement than of industry: and hence it has been commonly observed, that wherever there is a show, an entertainment, or a crowd, the women are more numerous than the men: But theatrical entertainments of all kinds; balls, assemblies, operas, ridottos, and reviews, seem to be the scenes of their peculiar delight; because, at these, they can indulge their natural propensity for show and ostentation. Riding, walking, sailing, and, in some countries of Europe, even skating, and being drawn on the ice in sledges, are female amusements. Besides these, and many others too tedious to mention, the women of fashion, in most parts of Europe, spend a great part of their time in receiving and returning visits; and in some of the politer nations, modern visiting is not spending a social hour together; it consists only in her ladyship ordering her coachman to drive to the doors of so many of her acquaintances,

quaintances, and her footman, at each of them, to give in a card with her name, while the lady of the house, though, in the polite phrase, *not at home*, is looking through the window all the while to see what passes; and in some convenient time after returns the visit, and is sure to be received in the same manner.

CHAP.  
IV.



BUT of all the happy inventions discovered by modern ingenuity for killing time, card-playing is justly entitled to the preference; with an immoderate itch for this amusement, both sexes, and all ranks and degrees of people, are deeply infected; particularly indolent clergy and women, who, having little to do, dedicate themselves so assiduously to gaming, that it is difficult to determine whether they live to play, or play to live. To cards, when made use of only to unbend the mind fatigued with study, or to pass away an idle hour, we have no objection, nor do we flatter ourselves, that any thing we can say on the subject will, in the least, influence the conduct of such as are habituated to them. We would only, therefore, as we pass along, recommend to the ministers of religion, to

CHAP.  
IV.



set a watch over their tongues, while playing with bad success, for an unguarded oath, or a few silly exclamations at a card table, may do more hurt to religion and their character, than they can ever repair by the most exemplary lives, and the most elegant orations. To the fair, to the lovely virgins of this favourite island, when thus engaged, we would recommend the strictest care of their temper, lest something should escape from their lips, that may belie the soft, the bewitching appearance, with which nature has painted their exterior forms,

To the female diversions and amusements now mentioned, we might add many more; but as a bare recital of names, makes a dry and unentertaining page, and as a description of each would be tedious and insipid, we shall only observe, in general, that such is human, and particularly female nature, when tutored by European art, that it constantly shews a greater proclivity to the gay and the amusive, than to the sober and useful scenes of life; and loves better to sport away time amidst the flowers that strow the path of pleasure, than to be entangled among the briars and thorns which perplex the

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the path of care. But notwithstanding this, we must do justice to the sex, in asserting, that as their attachments are always stronger than those of the men, such of them as attach themselves to œconomy and industry, pursue their plan with a more steady and inflexible constancy; and are neither to be tempted to deviate from it by the hope of pleasure, nor the fear of pain.

CHAP.  
IV.

CHAP.

## C H A P. V.

*Of the Treatment, Condition, Advantages,  
and Disadvantages of Women, in savage  
and civil Life.*

C H A P.  
V.

Thoughts  
on the  
condition  
of women.

THERE is in the fate of women something exceedingly singular; they have at all periods, and almost in all countries, been, by our sex, constantly oppressed and adored. And what renders their case still more extraordinary, is, that we have not oppressed, because we hated, but because we loved them. We have not in Asia and Africa confined them; because, like the lion and the tyger, we were afraid of their depredations; but because we were unwilling that any body should share with us the pleasure and enjoyment of their company. We have not in Europe assumed almost the sole management of affairs, because we were afraid that they would manage them to our prejudice, but only to save them the trouble of thought and labour, and to enable them to live in ease and elegance.

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Is their fate hard, in Asia, Africa, and Europe, it is still more so in America; there, they have not attained consequence enough even to merit confinement, as in Asia and Africa; and far less, to merit that exemption from labour and perpetual guardianship, by which, in Europe, they are complimented and chained. As strength and courage are in savage life the only means of attaining to power and distinction, so weakness and timidity are the certain paths to slavery and oppression. On this account, we shall almost constantly find women among savages condemned to every species of servile, or rather, of slavish drudgery; and shall as constantly find them emerging from this state, in the same proportion as we find the men emerging from ignorance and brutality; the rank, therefore, and condition, in which we find women in any country, mark out to us with the greatest precision, the exact point in the scale of civil society, to which the people of such country have arrived; and were their history entirely silent on every other subject, and only mentioned the manner in which they treated their women, we would, from thence, be enabled to form a tolerable judgment of the barbarity, or culture of their manners.

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CHAP.  
V.

~ mankind, naturally consider strength as giving an unlimited right to whatever it can take possession of. This idea, the savage derives, not only from all his neighbours, but also from his attention to the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air; every one of which appropriates to itself, whatever it can take from a weaker being of its own, or of any other species; and from this source arises the barbarous custom of enslaving and treating with severity, that sex which nature had formed with a beauty and tenderness sufficient to sooth us into softer behaviour. But though among people of savage and uncultivated manners, this natural weakness of the sex has subjected them to almost every species of indignity, among the civil and polite, it has had a very different effect; these, disdaining to take the advantage of weakness, and rather considering it as intitled to their protection and indulgence, have from generosity of principle, raised women to a rank and condition, in many cases superior even to that enjoyed by themselves; but as we shall have occasion afterwards to mention the reasons why the sex are ill treated, we shall at present proceed to




to take a view of their progress from slavery to freedom, and to mark the various causes which have more or less accelerated or retarded that progress.

CHAP.  
V.  
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THIS enquiry we shall begin with the condition of women among the ancient patriarchs, a condition which appears to have been but extremely indifferent. When Abraham entertained the angels sent to denounce the destruction of Sodom, he seems to have treated his wife as a menial servant: "Make ready quickly," said he to her, "three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes on the hearth." And from the sequel of the story it is plain, that she was not admitted to partake of the entertainment she had dressed. In ages so remote as these we are now considering, the imperfect and mutilated accounts from which alone we can draw any information, sometimes relate incidents which have so little resemblance to the manners and customs of our times, that we are altogether at a loss how to account for them. Though Sarah officiated as a servant in preparing this entertainment, she had at the same time one, or rather, perhaps, several handmaids or maid-servants under

Condition  
of women  
in the pa-  
triarchal  
ages.

CHAP. her, but in what they were employed, or  
V.  how they served their mistress, we can only conjecture.

WE have already observed, that among nations but little cultivated, power is constantly made use of as a means to enslave; and from this principle we must derive the ill-treatment of the Israelitish women, and the abuse of their captives. In the whole early history of that people, there is hardly one instance of a woman having been treated with indulgence, or of a captive having experienced humanity.

IN many parts of the East, water is only to be met with deep in the earth, and to draw it from the wells is consequently fatiguing and laborious. This, however, was the task of the daughters of Jethro the Midianite, to whom so little regard was paid, either on account of their sex or the rank of their father, as high-priest of the country, that the neighbouring shepherds not only insulted them, but forcibly took from them the water they had drawn. This was the task of Rebecca, who not only drew water for Abraham's servant, but for his camels also; while  
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the servant stood an idle spectator of the CHAP.  
V.  
 toil; and what makes his behaviour appear   
 the more extraordinary is, that his circumstances at that time were these, in which men who have any sensibility generally exert their utmost efforts to please and become acceptable. He was on an embassy to court the damsel for Isaac his master's son. When he had concluded his bargain, and was carrying her home, we meet with a circumstance which, in the times we are considering, strongly marks the inferiority of women. When she first approached Isaac, who had walked out into the fields to meet her, she did it in the most submissive manner, as if she had been approaching a lord and master, rather than a fond and passionate lover; from this circumstance, as well as from several others related in the sacred history, it would seem that women, instead of endeavouring, as in modern times, to persuade the world that they confer an immense favour on a lover by deigning to accept of him, made no difficulty of confessing that the obligation was conferred on themselves\*. When Jacob

\* This was the case with Ruth, who had laid her down at the feet of Boaz; and being asked by him who she was, answered, "I am  
 " Ruth thine handmaid; spread, therefore, thy skirt over thine hand-  
 " maid, for thou art a near kinsman."

CHAP. V. went to visit his uncle Laban, a man of considerable property, he met Rachel, Laban's daughter, in the fields, attending on the flocks of her father. In a much later period, Tamar, one of the daughters of king David, was sent by her father to perform the servile office of making cakes for her brother Amnon. And still later than this, the queen of Jeroboam king of Israel, went in person, perhaps on foot, or on an ass, to consult an old prophet. The simplicity of the times in which these things happened, greatly invalidates the strength of the conclusions that naturally arise from them, and makes them prove less than they would otherwise do; but in spite of that simplicity, it still appears that women were not then treated even with the rudiments of the delicacy they have happily experienced in ages, and among people more polished and refined.

Proofs of  
this con-  
dition

BUT should the simplicity of the times be admitted as a full excuse for what we have now mentioned, there are other proofs that women were treated in an indignant manner, which can admit of no such palliative. Husbands had a discretionary power of divorcing

divorcing their wives, without assigning any other reason for it than that they were not agreeable to them; and as if such a power over the bodies of women had not been a circumstance sufficiently humiliating to the sex, they had a power not less extraordinary over their minds also. Husbands and fathers were authorized to annul and make void even the most solemn vows of their wives and daughters, provided such vows were not made in the hearing of these husbands and fathers; in which case, if they did not immediately enter their dissent, they were considered as parties who had approved of them, and could not set them aside afterward. Was not this plainly declaring, that women were beings of a nature so inferior as not to be capable of entering properly into any solemn or religious engagement for themselves? In some cases a kind of public contempt was thrown on the sex, as appears from the law concerning child-bed purification, by which it was enacted, That she who had brought forth a female-child, should not be accounted clean in less than sixty-six days; whereas she who had brought forth a male, was clean in half that time. As no natural reason can be assigned for such a law,

CHAP.  
V.  
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CHAP. V. law, it has generally been thought expressive  
 of that contempt and degradation which, in  
 in the times we are delineating, was thrown  
 on the sex, as an inferior order of beings.

To the proofs we have already adduced of the despicable condition of women in the primitive ages, we may add the universal customs of polygamy and concubinage, impositions, so contrary to the inclination of the sex, and which so deeply wound the delicacy of their feelings, that we cannot suppose any woman voluntarily to agree to them, even where they are sanctified by custom and by law. Wherever, therefore, they take place, we may assure ourselves that women have but little authority, and have scarcely arrived at any consequence in society. But as human nature has in all ages been marked with inconsistency, though such in general was the condition of the sex, some few individuals had crept into power and authority. A wise woman, as she is called in scripture, saved the city of Abel, by prevailing on the inhabitants to cut off the head of Sheba, and throw it over the wall to Joab, who thereupon retired with his army. And Deborah, a prophetess, was raised

raised to the dignity of judging Israel. The exaltation of these, and of others, into conditions so different from the rest of their sex, is, perhaps, not to be accounted for upon any other principle than superstition, which readily believed that every glimmering of knowledge, and every superior attainment, were inspirations of the divinity; and taught the people that they should yield themselves up to be governed with the most implicit confidence, by those who were thus enlightened and inspired.

CHAP.  
V.  
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FROM the ancient people of Israel, and the nations around them, who treated their women with so much indignity and contempt; let us turn towards the Egyptians, whom we shall find, on the contrary, using them with a complaisance and humanity which would have done honour to the most enlightened ages. As these people were situated in the midst of nations, who in this particular shewed them so ill an example, before we proceed to the facts, let us enquire into the causes which produced them.

Condition  
of the  
Egyptian  
women.

WHEREVER the human race live solitary and unconnected with each other, they are savage

Causes of  
this con-  
dition.

CHAP. V. savage and barbarous. Wherever they associate together, that association becomes productive of softer manners, and a more engaging deportment. While the people who inhabited the neighbourhood of Egypt, were neither confined by situation, nor external circumstances, and while their woods and their rivers afforded them the means of constantly subsisting themselves by hunting and fishing; the Egyptians, from the nature of their country, annually overflowed by the Nile, had no wild beasts to hunt, nor could then procure any thing by fishing; on these accounts they were under a necessity of applying themselves to agriculture, a kind of life which naturally brings mankind together for mutual convenience and assistance; but, besides, they were every year, during the inundation of the river, obliged to assemble themselves together, and take shelter either on the rising grounds, or in the houses which were raised upon piles above the reach of the waters; here almost every employment being suspended, and the men and women long confined together, a thousand inducements, not to be found in a solitary state, would naturally prompt them to render themselves agreeable to each other, and hence



hence their manners would begin more early to assume a softer polish, and more elegant refinement, than those of the other nations who surrounded them.


CHAP.  
V.

IN this social state, a state which at that time did not exist any where but in Egypt, the women had an opportunity of displaying all their charms, and discovering all their good qualities. The men learned from their behaviour, that they were not such contemptible beings as they had been delineated, they therefore began to treat them with an indulgence and humanity unheard of among the neighbouring nations; and though we have already related from Herodotus, that the sex were employed in agriculture, there are many reasons to make us believe, that if any of them were so employed, it was only these of the meanest condition, the rest being exempted from those laborious tasks, commonly assigned them by barbarians. This exemption appears to be demonstrated from the whole of the conduct of their men towards them, and receives an additional proof from the story of Psammetichus, one of their kings; who, being made prisoner at the reduction of Memphis,

CHAP. V. was with the chief of his nobility placed on an eminence near the city, while his daughter, and the rest of the captive women were ordered to bear water in pitchers from the river; a circumstance which so mortified the king, that he is said to have felt more on that occasion than for the loss of his liberty and kingdom; but, had this been a common custom in Egypt, as we have already seen it among the neighbouring nations, it could not have been chosen as the most eligible mode of adding to the sorrows of the distressed monarch.

Egyptian  
women  
not con-  
fined.

WE shall afterwards have occasion to relate, that in a very earlier period the practice of confining women was introduced into the East; this practice, however, instituted by jealousy, and maintained by unlawful power, was never adopted by the Egyptians, as appears from the story of Pharaoh's daughter, who was going with her train of maids to bathe in the river, when she found Moses hid among the reeds; and also from that of the wife of Potiphar, who, if she had been confined, could not have found the opportunities she did to solicit Joseph to her adulterous embrace. To these

these testimonies of the sacred scripture, we CHAP.  
V.  
may add the authority of Herodotus, and   
some of the other writers on ancient Egypt,  
who, besides mentioning several anecdotes  
which could not have happened to women  
in harems and seraglios, generally agree that  
they were at least equal in authority to the  
men; and if they were, it would be incon-  
sistent to think that they allowed themselves  
to be shut up and deprived of society, by  
beings who neither had, nor claimed any  
superiority over them.

THE men in Egypt were not allowed to Laws and  
customs  
in their  
favour.  
indulge in polygamy,\* an indulgence which  
always presupposes women to be slaves. The  
chastity of virgins was protected by a law  
of the severest nature; he who committed  
a rape on a free woman, had his privities  
cut off, that it might be out of his power  
ever to perpetrate the like crime, and that  
the licentiousness of others might be re-  
strained, by the fear of so dreadful a punish-  
ment. Concubinage, as well as polygamy,  
seems either not to have been lawful, or at  
least not fashionable; it was a liberty, how-  
ever, in which their kings were sometimes  
indulged, for we find when Sesostris set out

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on

\* According to Diod. Siculus  
the Priests alone were restrained  
from Polygamy; all other Persons  
might have as many wives as

CHAP.  
V.

on his expedition to conquer the world, he left the government of the kingdom to his brother, with full power over every thing, except the royal diadem, the queen, and royal concubines. The queens of Egypt are said to have been much more honoured, as well as more readily obeyed than the kings; and it is also related, that the husbands were in their marriage-contracts obliged to promise obedience to their wives; an obedience which in our modern times we are often obliged to perform, though our wives entered into the promise.

BUT nothing can exhibit the power and consequence of the Egyptian women in a stronger light than a law, by which it was ordained, That daughters and not sons should provide for their parents when they became aged or indigent; a law which would have been highly unjust, had not these daughters enjoyed more than an equal share of the property derived from the parents for whom they were obliged to provide. We shall only add further, that the behaviour of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter, is a convincing proof that more honour and respect was paid to the Egyptian women than  
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to those of any other people. Solomon had many other wives besides this princess, and was married to several of them before her, which according to the Jewish law ought to have entitled them to a preference; but we hear of no particular palace having been built for any of the others, nor of the worship of any of their gods having been introduced into Jerusalem; while for Pharaoh's daughter, a magnificent palace was erected, and she permitted, though expressly contrary to the laws of Israel, to worship the gods of her own country; circumstances which we cannot believe would have happened, had they not been stipulated between the Egyptians and Solomon in the marriage agreement. But loaded with all the honours and preferments we have mentioned, invested often with the sovereign power, as well as the management of their own families; the fair sex were sometimes reached by superstition, that frenzy of the human mind, which neither regards the laws of nature nor of nations; *a virgin was at certain times sacrificed to Annubis.*

CHAR.  
V.  


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CHAP.  
V.

As the defence of a nation did not depend on the strength of the single arm that wielded its scepter, women were in several other countries as well as ancient Egypt, allowed to succeed to the crown in default of male heirs; but, as the defence of private property depended more immediately on the power of the proprietor, they were seldom allowed to inherit what they could not defend; even this privilege, however, was granted them by the Egyptians, who ordained that the sex might succeed to the paternal inheritance of their fathers.

Assyrian  
women,  
how  
treated.

THE first account that we have of the Assyrian women attaining any consequence, begins with the reign of Semiramis. This woman, the most extraordinary of antiquity, was the wife of an officer in the army of Ninus king of Assyria, who being attracted by her beauty and art, married her after the death of her husband; an action of which, according to some authors, he had soon reason to repent; for she having first brought over to her interest the principal men of the state, next prevailed on the infatuated Ninus to invest her five days with the sovereign power. A decree was accordingly issued,



issued; that all the provinces should implicitly obey her during that time; which having obtained, she began the exercise of sovereignty, by putting to death the too indulgent husband who had conferred it on her, and so securing to herself the kingdom. Other authors have denied that Ninus committed this rash, or Semiramis this execrable deed, but all agree that she succeeded him at his death, in whatever manner it happened. Seeing herself at the head of a mighty empire, and seized with the ambition of immortalising her memory, she proposed to do something that should far surpass all that had been done by her predecessors: in pursuance of this scheme she built the mighty city of Babylon; which being finished within the space of one year, greatly exceeded in splendour and magnificence, any thing the world had ever seen. Two millions of men are said to have been constantly employed on it, during the time it was erecting.

FROM the advancement of Semiramis to the Assyrian empire, it would seem that some degree of personal liberty was one of the prerogatives of the women of that country; for wherever the sex are strictly confined  
by

**CHAP. V.** by their fathers and husbands, we can hardly suppose their political influence to have been such as could form a party sufficient to bring about a total revolution of state; especially in the East, where they are commonly considered as beings too weak and insignificant, to be allowed the privilege of mounting a throne, unless aided by the power of superstition, and the notion of a right derived from their gods. But though the Assyrian women seem, in general, to have enjoyed some liberty, yet their monarchs, according to the custom of their neighbours, had seraglios, where such ladies as belonged to them, were probably more strictly confined than the other women of the country.

THAT seraglios were a part of the magnificence of the Assyrian monarchs, appears from several anecdotes in their history, and particularly from the story of Sardanapalus, who, instead of employing his time in the affairs of government, dedicated himself entirely to debauchery among his women, affecting not only the softness and effeminacy of their voice and manners, but learning also to handle the distaff, and amuse himself  
by





by working in the other trifles with which they were employed. As we have already seen that, in the earlier ages, women of the greatest rank and quality, were not ashamed to perform those offices, which, in our times, would be considered as beneath the dignity of their waiting-maids, we are not to be surprised, that the women of the august monarch of Assyria should employ themselves in spinning; but that the effeminate monarch himself, who had business and pleasure, in so many shapes, at his command, should take up the distaff for his amusement, not only excites our astonishment, but our contempt; and strongly marks the littleness of that mind, which, surrounded with such a variety, could select a diversion so insignificant and unbecoming. We may, perhaps, account for this, by observing, that women of talents, superior to the rest of their sex, generally associate with men; and that men of inferior talents, finding themselves despised by the men, on that account associate with women. This observation, besides pointing out the reason why Sardanapalus confined himself to the seraglio, likewise discovers the reason why Semiramis arrived at the royal diadem of Assyria; an elevation

CHAP. which, though it did honour to the sex, yet  
did not prove that they had, in general, attained to that importance to which they are entitled, by the place which they hold in the scale of rational beings; for, throughout the whole continent of Asia, women have from time immemorial, been considered either as public or private property, and sold to such husbands as would give the highest price for them. In Assyria, they were the property of the state, and by the magistrates disposed of in marriage to the highest bidder, by way of auction.

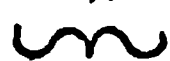
IN an early period of the world, while as yet women had attained to little dignity and consequence, we find an universal notion of female, as well as of male deities, obtained among mankind; this notion did not arise solely from the polytheism of the times, but also from a belief that the gods propagated their species after the manner of mortal men. All antiquity demonstrates it to have been a general opinion, that they often cohabited with, and had children by the daughters of men; which children were reckoned partakers of a divine nature in their life-time; and after their death were worshipped

C H A P.  
V

worshipped as real deities. Perhaps it was owing to this opinion that divine honours were paid to Semiramis, that her statue was erected in the famous temple at Hierapolis, and every day resorted to by a numerous croud of adorers. When it became fashionable to pay divine honours to illustrious persons after death, it was no very difficult matter to be ranked among the gods. But in a period when the fair sex were considered as of little importance, we cannot help thinking, that superior talents and abilities, as well as the idea of a divine original were necessary to procure that exalted distinction to a woman.

Of the  
Babyloni-  
an wo-  
men.

THE whole history of mankind points out to us, that where women have attained to little or no consequence in society, and are only considered as the servile instruments of supplying our wants, and gratifying our passions, there is but little care taken, either to adorn their minds, or their bodies. Among the Babylonians, though we are not informed what care was taken of the female mind, from a variety of scattered hints, which particularly abound in the prophets of the Old Testament, we may infer, that

CHAP.  
V.

the greatest attention was bestowed in decorating and adorning their bodies, with every costly ornament which fondness could invent, and affluence supply: incontestible proofs that they were objects of no small importance, and the peculiar care of the men. But further, the Babylonians were a wise and cultivated people; and we may with truth assert, that culture of manners never yet existed, without extending its influence to the interest and convenience of the fair sex.

THAT some of the queens of Babylon were more regarded, and of greater consequence than is common to the herd of women confined in the seraglios of eastern monarchs, appears from the story of Nitocris, consort of Nabonadius: while Nabonadius, neglecting the affairs of his kingdom, devoted himself entirely to scenes of the most voluptuous debauchery, Nitocris took upon her the care of the state, and managed it so as to give universal satisfaction; a circumstance, which was not likely to have happened, had not women possessed a tolerable share of public esteem and confidence. But we will see that public esteem and confidence were not so difficult to be obtained by the  
Babylonian

Babylonian women, as by those of the neighbouring nations, when we consider that they admitted the sex to connival meetings, where they lived in a free and unrestrained manner, with every opportunity of exerting the various arts of pleasing; and, consequently, of gaining that ascendancy which will ever fall to the share of beauty and sense. Notwithstanding this general importance, such of the Babylonish women as were poor, like the poor of every country, were destined to attend on, and minister to the pleasures of the rich; who, at their meals, were served by a great number of eunuchs, and singing and dancing girls, carefully selected from the fairest and handsomest of the country. When the Babylonians became poor, by the ruin of their metropolis, fathers prostituted their daughters for gain, and husbands, who had formerly been hindered from using their wives ill, by a particular law, then broke through every restraint; and, it is said, even compelled them to offer themselves to strangers for hire. But the tyranny of the men did not terminate here, to this shameless indifference about their own honour, and that of the sex with whom they were connected by the most sacred ties; they added the most unexampled

CHAP.  
V.



unexampled cruelty. When the Babylonians rebelled against Darius, they assembled all the women of their city, and after every man had chosen his most beloved wife, and another woman to be his domestic slave; they put all the rest to the sword, that they might not consume the provisions laid up for the siege.

Scythian  
women  
treated  
with in-  
dulgence.

CONCERNING the condition of the Scythian women, little has been handed down to our times; only that they, as well as those of the Gauls and Germans, were anciently held in great esteem for their skill in divination. We know not whether it was on account of this esteem, or because they were thought weak and inoffensive, that in some cases the Scythian women were treated with more lenity than the men. By one of their laws, when a father was put to death, all his sons suffered along with him, while the daughters escaped with impunity. These people, the most plain and simple of all antiquity, being reproached with cowardice, for retreating from their desert frontiers, before a superior army: “In those desolate  
“wastes, said they, we have nothing worth  
“fighting for; but when you arrive at the  
“tombs

“ tombs of our ancestors, and the habita-  
 “ tions of our women, you shall see whether  
 “ we can defend them.”

CHAP.  
 V.  



FROM the accounts handed down to us of the Phœnicians, they appear to have been long a flourishing and prosperous people, who had acquired great riches by their superior skill in commerce and navigation; we may therefore reasonably suppose, that, in a country, whose inhabitants were so far advanced in the arts of civil life, the women had attained to that importance we generally find them possessed of in such countries; especially when we consider the attention that was paid to ornamenting them, by all the finery they could purchase in the various nations to which they traded. But though the Phœnicians spared no cost in adorning their women with elegance, they appear to have stamped upon them one mark of inferiority and subordination; they did not allow them to wear the Tyrian purple, a colour which they held in so great estimation, that the use of it was only permitted to men of the most distinguished quality. The Romans solely appropriated it to their monarchs as a badge of regal dignity. In  
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Their pri-  
 vileges in  
 some  
 other na-  
 tions.

CHAP.  
V.


the Balearic Isles, so far were they from fixing any mark of inferiority on the fair sex, that they gave three or four men in exchange for every one of their women who was taken captive; a conduct so singular, that some particular reason for it must have existed, of which we are not informed; perhaps it was only done at the first planting of a colony, while the women, as in the origin of Rome, were few and valuable. Among the Lycians, a people of the Lesser Asia, a custom also obtained; which, at first view, seems to exalt the women far above the men. In their sex alone was the fountain of honour and nobility; insomuch that if a woman of quality married a pleabian, their issue were noble; but if a nobleman married a foreigner or peasant, the children, in that case, were only pleabians. But this custom, when more nearly examined, will be found to have originated from a different motive than love or esteem; it is at this day practised in some parts of America; and the reason there given for it is, because they are sure who is the mother of a child; and that the noble or royal blood of a family may, on her side, be easily preserved; whereas, they have no certainty who is the father;



father; and by the incontinence of a wife, CHAP.  
V.  
the noble or royal blood may, on the male   
side, be totally extinguished.

IF the Phœnicians treated their women with propriety, we may reasonably expect to find nearly the same customs concerning them transplanted into Carthage; the Carthaginians being originally a colony from Tyre, the capital of Phœnicia. As there was something uncommon in the origin of this colony; as it was founded by a woman, whose name has been immortalised by Virgil, and not unknown even to the generality of female readers, we hope it will not be deemed altogether foreign to our subject to give a short account of it. Of the  
Phœnicians.

PYGMALION, king of Tyre, had a sister, called Eliza, but known to us by the name of Dido; having married her to Sichæus, one of their own relations, and finding that Sichæus was possessed of great riches, he caused him to be put to death, that they might fall into his hands. Dido, detesting this execrable deed of her brother, and desirous to disappoint him of that wealth, which had been the cause of it, cunningly

CHAP. V.  amused him, till she had got all things in readiness; and then privately eloped with the most valuable effects of her murdered husband. After a long series of disastrous events, she at last landed on the coast of the Mediterranean, at a little distance from the place where the piratical city of Tunis now stands. There, having purchased some land of the natives, she settled a colony of such as had adhered to, and followed her fortune.

SOON after this settlement, the natives of the country, invited by a prospect of gain, resorted to the strangers with the necessities of life, and such other commodities as were most wanted. Finding themselves always civilly treated, they at last gradually incorporated with them into one people. And sometime afterward, the citizens of Utica beginning also to consider them as countrymen, sent ambassadors, with considerable presents, exhorting them to build a city on the place where they at first landed; this proposal being agreeable to the secret wishes of Dido, and her infant colony, the city was begun, and called *Carthada*, or *Carthage*; which, in the Phœnician language, signifies the New City. WHAT

WHAT Virgil has related concerning this first queen of Carthage, is only to be considered as a poetical fiction; for it appears that she lived at least two hundred years before the time of his hero Æneas, and at last finished her days, not as he represents, a victim to love, but to that kind of conjugal fidelity then in fashion, which considered it as criminal to marry a second husband; for, being courted by Jarbas, king of Getulia, who threatened her with war in consequence of a refusal; and having bound herself by an oath to Sichæus, never to consent to a second marriage, she foresaw that she would either be obliged to break her vow, or bring a powerful enemy on her infant colony; to extricate herself therefore from the difficulty, she ascended and leapt into a funeral pile which she had caused her subjects to erect, unconscious of the purpose to which she intended to apply it.

AMONG a people whose political existence was owing to a woman, and to one who in her life had conducted them with so much prudence, and at her death made so disinterested a sacrifice for their safety; it is natural to imagine that the sex would be

CHAP.  
V

than was common in the periods we are reviewing. Accordingly, we have several reasons to believe, that the women of Carthage were neither obliged to do the servile drudgery, nor submit to the slavish subjection of the men. That the Carthaginians on the contrary had sentiments of a more elevated nature concerning their women, appears from a story related of them by Diodorus, the Sicilian. When the city of Tyre was besieged by Alexander the Great, the Tyrians being reduced to the utmost extremity, sent an embassy to the Carthaginians imploring their assistance; the Carthaginians being at the same time engaged in a war with the Athenians, and scarcely in a condition to make head against Agathocles, the Athenian general, were not able to grant that assistance they so earnestly wished to give; but to soften the refusal, they agreed to receive into Carthage, all the wives and children of their friends the Tyrians; that they, at least, might escape the outrages which their sex generally suffer at the plundering of a city.

It


C H A P.  
V.

It is the characteristic of men in every civilized nation, to treat the weaker sex with lenity and indulgence; to this they are prompted, not only by the softer sensations instilled by nature, but also by that additional humanity, and those finer feelings, which are commonly the result of knowledge, and which raise the mind above what is mean, and inspire it only with what is generous and noble. Hence, whenever we find a people treating their women with propriety, we may, without any further knowledge of their history, conclude that their minds are not uncultivated. When we find them cultivated, we may conclude, that they treat their women with propriety. We shall only add, therefore, concerning the Carthaginians, that the character they bore for wisdom, for learning, and the arts, leaves us no room to doubt that they behaved to the fair sex in general, as became a people so highly distinguished.

SOME of the Greek, and several of the Roman historians, in mentioning the ancient Persians, have dwelt with peculiar severity on the manner in which they treated their women; jealous, almost to distraction, they

Persian  
women,  
how  
treated.

CHAP. confined the whole sex with the strictest attention, and could not bear that the eye of a stranger should behold the beauty, whom they adored. When Mahomet, the great legislator of the modern Persians, was just expiring, the last advice that he gave to his faithful adherents, was, “be watchful of your religion, and your wives.” Hence they pretend to derive, not only the power of confining, but also of persuading them, that they hazard their salvation if they look upon any other man besides their husbands. The Christian religion informs us, that in the other world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; that of Mahomet teaches a different doctrine, which the Persians believing, carry the jealousy of Asia to the fields of Elysium, and the groves of Paradise; where, according to them, the blessed inhabitants have their eyes placed on the crown of their heads, lest they should see the wives of their neighbours. Were the tenets sanctified by religion, like those of philosophy, open to the investigation of reason, the Persians would easily discover the awkward situation of their saints in heaven, who can no more see their own wives than those of other people, without stooping; and who  
in

in their progress from one place to another, C H A P.  
V.  
must be in perpetual danger of breaking   
their noses against every thing in their way.

THE Persian monarchs placed almost the whole of their grandeur, and of their enjoyment, in the number and beauty of the women of their seraglios; which being carefully selected from among the fairest, either taken captive in war, or produced by their own dominions, were purified for their use by a long and tedious preparation, luxuriously voluptuous beyond any thing that modern refinement has ever suggested. Agreeable to an observation we made in the beginning of this chapter, every circumstance in the Persian history tends to persuade us, that the motive which induced them to confine their women with so much care and solicitude, was only exuberance of love and affection. In the enjoyment of their smiles, and their embraces, the happiness of the men consisted, and their approbation was an incentive to deeds of glory and of heroism; for these reasons, they are said to have been the first who introduced the custom of carrying their wives and concubines to the field, “ That the sight, said they, of all that  
“ is

CHAP. V. “is dear to us, may animate us to fight  
 “more valiantly”. To offer the least violence, to a Persian woman, was to incur certain death from her husband or guardian; nay, even their kings, though the most absolute in the universe, could not alter the manners or customs of the country which concerned them.\* This appears from the behaviour of Cabas, a licentious monarch, who, not satisfied with the numerous beauties of his seraglio, issued a decree, commanding the promiscuous use of all the women of his dominions, whether married or unmarried; but his subjects instead of

\* Widely different from this is the present state of Persia. By a law of that country their monarch is now authorised to go whenever he pleases to the haram of any of his subjects, and the subject on whose prerogative he thus encroaches, so far from exerting his usual jealousy, reckons himself highly honoured by being royally cornuted. A laughable story on this subject is told of Shah Abbas, who having got drunk at the house of one of his favourites, and intending to go into the apartment of his wives, was stopped by the door-keeper, who bluntly told him; *not a man, Sir, besides my master, shall put a mustache here so long as I am porter*. What, said the king, dost thou not know me? Yes, answered the fellow, I know you are king of the men, but not of the women. Shah Abbas, pleased with the answer and the fidelity of the servant, retired to his palace. The favourite at whose house the adventure happened, as soon as he heard it, went and fell at his master's feet, intreating that he would not impute to him the crime committed by his domestic, and adding, I have already turned him away from my service for his presumption. I am glad of it, answered the king, for then I will take him into my service for his fidelity.

complying



complying with the order, rose with indignation, and expelled from the throne, the wretch who had endeavoured to introduce such disorder and confusion into their empire.

NOTWITHSTANDING this jealousy which occasioned the confinement of the sex, there were at the Persian court, women who were introduced on certain occasions, and with whom every freedom might be used. This we learn from the story of Megabyfus, a governor under Darius; who having sent some Persian noblemen to Amintas, king of Macedon, to require him to do homage to his master; Amintas complied with the request, and gave them a splendid entertainment. Towards the conclusion of it, they desired that, according to the custom of their country, the women might be brought in, to which, though contrary to the custom of the Greeks, the king consented. The Persians heated with wine, and thinking they might behave to the Grecian princesses as to the women of Persia, began to take some indecent freedoms; the son of Amintas, affronted at the treatment of his sisters, told the Persians, that if they would allow the

CHAP. V. women, in compliance with the custom of Greece, to retire and habit themselves in a loose manner, they would then return, and every one might chuse his partner for the night. The Persians gladly consented to this proposal, the women retired, the prince dressed some of the most comely of his young warriors in loose female habits, with poinards under their cloaths, and brought them into the room instead of the women, as soon as the Persians had each fixed upon his partner, on a signal from the prince, every one drew his poinard, and slaughtered the whole of them on the spot.

Of the Sybarites.

BEFORE we take leave of these dark and unenlightened periods, where the historic page hardly affords even the glimmering of a taper to direct us on our way, we must observe, that there are many other ancient people and nations whom we might have mentioned, but have passed over them in silence, because we are hardly acquainted with any thing but their names; or, at most, with a few of their warlike exploits and revolutions. We cannot help, however, making a few observations on the Sybarites, the most remarkable people of antiquity.

THE

THE Sybarites, from the imperfect ac- counts we have of them, placed the whole of their happiness in finery, feasting, indolence, and women. Their bodies were so much relaxed with sloth, and their minds with voluptuousness, that the greatest affront which could be offered to any one, was to call him a Sybarite, an appellation, which comprehended in it almost every human crime, and every human folly. In grottoes, cooled with fountains, their youth spent a great part of their time amidst scenes of debauchery, and surrounded with women, either elegantly adorned by art, or sometimes reduced to a state of nature. Women of the first quality, though not disposed of by auction, were treated in a manner somewhat similar; they were contended for, by exhibiting shows and entertainments of splendour and magnificence, and awarded to him who blended the greatest elegance, with the profusest liberality. When any great entertainment was designed, the ladies, who were to make a part of the company, were invited a year before, that they might have time to appear in all the lustre of beauty, and of dress; a circumstance which plainly proves that the Sybarites did not, as some other

CHAP.  
V. nations, value the sex only as objects of sensual pleasure, but as objects which added elegance to their scenes of festivity and grandeur; and, perhaps, because they excelled the men in softness and effeminacy, qualities upon which the Sybarites set the greatest value, and cultivated with the utmost assiduity.---These people, after having been for many centuries the contempt of the universe, were at last driven as dastards from their country, and entirely dispersed by the Crotonians,

CHAP.

## C H A P. VI.

*The same Subject continued.*

IN the last chapter we finished the few cursory observations we could make on those nations, whose history is wrapt in all the obscurity of remote antiquity, we now come to the Greeks; a people whose fame has been so much trumpeted, that we are apt to annex the idea of every virtue to their name, to consider them as highly polished and civilized, and consequently to expect that, amongst them, the fair sex were treated with that indulgence, and raised to that dignity, which they commonly enjoy in nations the farthest advanced in the arts of culture and refinement: But in this expectation we shall be much mistaken, for though the Greeks were a people severely virtuous in whatever regarded their country, they were far from being tender and humane, and hardly knew any of those soft blandishments which smooth the asperity of rugged male

C H A P.  
VI.Of the  
Greek  
women.

CHAP. VI. male nature; and which, while they render  
 us more agreeable to the women, are only  
 to be acquired in their company.

It is observed by an able panegyrist for the fair, that the greatest respect has always been paid them by the wisest and best of nations. If this be a fact, it naturally follows, that the Greeks forfeited one great claim to that wisdom which has always been attributed to them; for we have good reason to believe that they regarded their women only as instruments of raising up members to the state; considering them in the same cool, dispassionate, and we may add, unsocial light, as they considered their fields which produced the corn whereby the members of that state were fed. But lest we should be suspected of partiality, let us attend to some of the proofs of what we have advanced.

Confined  
 to their  
 apart-  
 ments.

To admire a fine woman, it is only necessary to see her; but in order to esteem, to regard the sex, we must do more than see, we must, by social intercourse and a mutual reciprocation of good offices, become acquainted with their worth and excellence. This, to the Greeks, was a pleasure  
 totally



totally unknown. Custom had introduced and established, the mode of obliging women to live retired in their own apartments; so that, if they had any amiable qualities, they were buried in perpetual obscurity. Even husbands were, in Sparta, limited as to the times and duration of the visits made to their wives, and it was the custom at meals for the two sexes always to eat separately.

THE apartments destined for the women, in order to keep them more private, were always in the back, and generally in the upper part of the house. The famous Helen is said to have had her chamber in the loftiest part of it, and so wretched were their dwellings, that even Penelope queen of Ulysses, seems to have descended from hers by a ladder; within these, however, women, especially such as had no husbands, whether maids or widows, were closely confined; the former in so strict a manner that they could not pass without leave from one part of the house to another, lest they should be seen; which, as we learn from the story of Antigone, would have been a reflection on their own honour, as well as on the care and integrity of their guardians. New-married

CHAP.  
VI.

married women were almost as strictly confined as virgins; Hermione was severely reprov'd by her old duenna, for appearing out of doors; a freedom, which, she tells her, was not usually taken by women in her situation, and which would endanger her reputation, should she happen to be seen. Menander asserts, that the door was the utmost limit allowed to the freedom of a married woman, at least, till she had brought forth a child, when her keepers sometimes relaxed a little of their severity; but this relaxation was entirely an indulgence of their husbands, who, perhaps, thought them now either more prudent, or less the objects of temptation; and might still, if they pleas'd, retain them in the same rigorous confinement, as we learn from Aristophanes; who introduces an Athenian lady, loudly complaining, that women were confined to their chambers, under lock and key, and guarded by mastiffs, goblins, or any thing that could frighten away admirers.

Cause of  
their con-  
finement.

THOUGH the Grecian women lived thus by themselves, yet they were not, like those of Asia, confined to seraglios, and obliged to share among a great number the scanty favours






favours of one man. Nor does their confinement appear in some cases to have been so much the effect of jealousy, as of indifference. The men did not think them proper companions; and that ignorance, which is the result of a recluse life, gave them too good reason to think so. Nothing in Greece was held in estimation, but valour and eloquence. Nature had disqualified the fair sex for both. They were therefore considered as mean and contemptible beings, much beneath the notice of heroes and of orators, who seldom favoured them with their company, unless prompted by animal appetite, or the desire of propagating future orators and heroes. Thus deserted by a sex, which ought to be the source of knowledge, the understandings of the women were but shallow, and their company uninteresting; circumstances which invariably happen in every country where the two sexes have little communication with each other.

BUT confinement was not the greatest evil which the Grecian women suffered; by other customs and laws they were still more oppressed. It was not in their power to do any judicial act without the consent of a

Other restrictions and hardships they suffered.

CHAP.  
VI.

tutor, or guardian; and so little power over themselves, did the legislature devolve upon women, though ripened by age and experience, that when the father died, the son became the guardian of his own mother. When a woman was cited into court, she was incapable of answering without her guardian; and therefore the words of the proclamation were, *We cite A. B. and her guardian*. No woman could dispose of herself in marriage without the consent of her father, or guardian; and what was worse, could not refuse such a husband as they chose for her. In making a will, it was not only necessary that the guardian should give his consent, but that he should be a party. These facts shew, that the Greek women were under the most complete tutelage, whereby they were deprived of almost all political existence; and teach us to consider a guardian and his pupil as the substance and the shadow, the latter of which could not exist without the former. But this is not all; we have already mentioned some of the slavish employments to which they were put, and shall now add, that, in the heroic ages, they did all the servile and domestic offices, even such as were inconsistent with

with the delicacy and modesty of the sex. CHAP.  
VL  
 They conducted the men to bed, dressed   
 and undressed them, attended them while  
 in the baths, dried and perfumed them when  
 they came out of them. Nor were these,  
 and such other offices, only allotted to serv-  
 ants or slaves, no rank was exempted from  
 them. The princess Nausica, daughter of  
 Alcinous, carried her own linen to the river  
 in a chariot, and having washed and laid it  
 on the bank, sat down by it, and dined on  
 the provision she had brought along with her.  
 When such was the employment of their  
 own women of rank, we cannot expect that  
 captives should share a happier fate; ac-  
 cordingly, we find Hector lamenting, that,  
 should Troy be taken, his wife would be  
 condemned to the most slavish drudgery; and  
 Hecuba bewailing her fate, in being chained  
 like a dog at the gate of Agamemnon.

If jealousy can only arise from love, as  
 the Lacedemonian husbands had no jealousy,  
 it will follow that they had no love, for,  
 without any reluctance, they borrowed and  
 lent their wives among each other; a kind  
 of barter totally inconsistent with that sym-

C H A P.  
VI.



pathetic union of souls, which always does, or ought to take place, between husband and wife: But this was not the only singularity of these people; for, by the laws of Solon, a lusty well-made young fellow might, when he pleased, demand permission to cohabit with the wife of any of his fellow-citizens, who was less handsome and robust than himself, under pretence of raising up children to the state, who should, like the father, be strong and vigorous; and such an unreasonable demand, the husband was not at liberty to reject. What still further shews how little delicacy existed in their connections with their wives, is, their conduct in a war with the Myssinians; when, having bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to return to their own city till they had revenged the injury they had received, and the war having been unexpectedly protracted for the space of ten years, they began to be afraid that a longer absence would tend greatly to depopulate their state; to prevent which, they sent back a certain number of those who had joined the army, after the above-mentioned oath had been taken, with full power to cohabit with all the wives, whose husbands

husbands were absent\*. Nothing can more plainly discover the despicable condition of the Grecian women: the state, as a body politic, regarded them only as instruments of general propagation; and their husbands indelicately acquiesced in the idea, which they never could have done, had they been actuated by any thing but animal appetite, and had not that appetite been fixed more on the sex than the individual.

CHAP.  
VI.



WHICHEVER way we turn ourselves in the Grecian history, we meet with the most convincing proofs of the low condition of their women. Homer considers Helen, the wife of Menelaus, of little other value than as a part of the goods which were stolen along with her; and the restitution of these, and of her, are commonly mentioned in the same sentence, in such a manner, as to shew, that such restitution would be considered as

\* Indelicacies of a similar kind were practised by other people as well as the Greeks. The Nasamones, it is said, obliged a bride on the first night of her marriage, to prostitute herself to all the men who were at the wedding, and in return, they each presented her with something towards her fortune. A custom not much different, is also said to have formerly been observed by the Scots, but by the disagreement of historians, its existence has been rendered uncertain. In ancient Lybia, it is also said, that the king might claim the first night of every bride.

CHAP.  
VI.

a full reparation of the injury sustained; so that Menelaus did not place the crime of Paris in having debauched his wife, but in having stolen from him to the amount of so much value. The same author, in celebrating Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, for refusing in his absence so many suitors, does not appear to place the merit of her conduct in a superior regard to chastity, or in love to her husband; but in preserving to his family the dowry she had brought along with her, which on a second marriage, must have been restored to her father Icarius. And though Telemachus is always represented as a most dutiful son, we find him reproving his mother in a manner, which shews that the sex in general were not treated with softness and delicacy, however dignified, or with whatever authority invested.

Your widowed hours, apart, with female toil,  
And various labours of the loom, beguile.  
There rule, from palace cares remote and  
free,

That care to man belongs, and most to me.

From the celebration of some of their public games, women were prohibited by the severest

severest penalty: to the festival at Eleusis, they were not to go in chariots: In some laws, they were classed with slaves. Women and slaves were forbid to practise physic. It was a custom in Greece to expose such children as parents thought themselves unable to maintain, or not likely to derive any advantage from. Daughters, according to Possidippus, being more costly in their education, and less likely to be beneficial afterward, were more frequently treated in this manner than sons.

C H A P.  
VI.  
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A man, though poor, will not expose his son;
But if he's rich, will scarce preserve his
daughter.

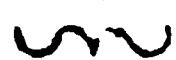
Of all the Greeks, the Thebans were the only people who had a positive law against this horrid custom.

LET us now turn to the other side of the picture, and take a view of the privileges bestowed by law or custom on the Greek women. In the earlier ages they were allowed a vote in the public assemblies, a privilege which was afterwards taken from them. They succeeded equally with brothers

Privileges
of the
Greek
women.

to

CHAP.
VI.



to the inheritance of their fathers; and to the whole of that inheritance if they had no brothers. But to this last privilege was always annexed a circumstance, which must have been extremely disagreeable to every woman of sentiment and feeling. An heiress was obliged, by the laws of Greece, to marry her nearest relation, that the estate might not go out of the family; and this relation, in case of her refusal, had a right to sue for the delivery of her person, as we do for goods and chattels. But, on the other side, as it sometimes happened that this claimant was old or impotent, it was provided by law, that if he did not, in a convenient time, make it appear by the pregnancy of his wife, that he had performed the duty of a husband, she might apply to any one she pleased for that purpose.

He who divorced his wife, was obliged either to return her dowry, or pay her so much per month by way of maintenance. He who ravished a free woman, was constrained in some states to marry her, in others to pay a hundred, and in others again, a thousand drachmas. But what reflects more honour
on

CHAP.
VI.

on the Greeks than any thing we find in their behaviour towards women, is the care they took of female orphans. "He who is the next in blood (says their law) to an orphan virgin, who hath no fortune, shall marry her himself, or settle a fortune upon her, according to his quality; if there be many relations, all equally allied, all of them, according to their several qualities, shall contribute something towards her fortune." After all, when we impartially consider the good and ill treatment of the Grecian women, we find that the balance was much against them, and may therefore conclude, that though the Greeks were eminent in arts, though they were illustrious in arms; yet in politeness and elegance of manners, the highest pitch to which they ever arrived, was only a few degrees above savage barbarity.

IN the more early periods of the Roman republic, as in the infancy of almost all the ancient nations, we find every thing involved in fable. Immortality and mortality hardly distinguishable from each other. Heroes and demigods, nymphs and goddesses, employed in almost every action, and residing in every grove. While clouded with such

Of the
Roman
women.

CHAP.
VI.

romantic ignorance, the Romans were a people but little acquainted with decency, and entire strangers to that delicacy which takes place between the two sexes, among nations tolerably advanced in civilization and society. At their first appearance, as an independant state, they were an handful of robbers, or banditti; and one of the first of their memorable actions, was the capture of some young women, to enable them to raise up members to the state they had erected: to these women, however, they behaved in a manner that we have seldom an opportunity of observing among a people so little cultivated. They treated them with so much kindness, and had the address so to please them, that they absolutely refused to be rescued from their ravishers. But as many of our female readers may not be acquainted with this history, we shall give a short sketch of it.

Rape of
the Sabine
Virgins.

WHEN Romulus, the founder of Rome, had formed his infant republic, finding that he had no women, and that none of the neighbouring nations would give their daughters in marriage to men whom they considered as a set of lawless banditti; he
was



was obliged by stratagem to procure for them what he could not obtain by intreaty.

Accordingly, he proclaimed a solemn feast, and an exhibition of games in honour of Equestrian Neptune; and having by that means gathered a great number of people together, on a signal given, the Romans, with drawn swords in their hands, rushed among the strangers, and forcibly carried away a great number of their daughters. The next day Romulus himself distributed them as wives to those of his citizens, who had thus by violence taken them away*. From so rude a beginning, and among a people so severe and inflexible as the Romans, it is not unnatural that the reader should expect to find their women treated in the same indignant, if not in a worse manner, than they were among the nations we have already mentioned. In this, however, he will be mistaken; it was the Romans who first gave to the sex public liberty, who first properly cultivated their minds, and thought it as necessary to do so as to adorn their bodies. Among them were they first fitted

* This is what we frequently find mentioned in history, by the name of the Rape of the Sabine Virgins.

C. H. A. P.
VI.



for society, and for becoming rational companions; and among them, was it first demonstrated to the world, that they were capable of great actions, and deserved a better fate than to be shut up in seraglios, and kept only as the pageants of grandeur, or instruments of satisfying illicit love; truths which the sequel of the history of the Sabine women will amply confirm.

THE violent capture of these young women by the Romans, was highly resented by all the neighbouring nations, and especially by the Sabines, to whom the greatest part of them belonged. They sent to demand restitution of their daughters, promising, at the same time, an alliance, and liberty of intermarrying with the Romans, should the demand be complied with. But Romulus not thinking it expedient to part with the only possible means he had of raising future citizens; instead of granting what they asked, demanded of the Sabines that they should confirm the marriages of their daughters with the Romans. These conferences, at last, produced a treaty of peace; the treaty, like many others of the same nature, ended in a more inveterate war.

The

The Roman gained some advantages. The Sabines retired; and having breathed a while, sent a second embassy to demand their daughters, were again refused; and again commenced hostilities. Being this time more successful, they besieged Romulus in his citadel of Rome, and threatened immediate destruction to him and all his people, unless their daughters were restored. In this alarming situation, Hersilia, wife of Romulus, demanded an audience of the senate, and laid before it a design the women had formed among themselves, without the knowledge of their husbands, which was, to act the part of mediators between the contending parties. Their mediation being accepted, a decree was immediately passed, permitting them to go on the proposed negotiation; and only requiring, that each of them should leave one of her children as a security that she would return; the rest, they were allowed to carry with them, as objects which might more effectually move compassion. Thus authorized, they laid aside their ornaments, put on mourning, and carrying their children in their arms, advanced to the camp of the Sabines, and threw themselves at the feet of their fathers:

and

CHAP.
VI.

CHAP.
VI.



and relations. The Sabine king, having assembled his chief officers, ordered the supplicants to declare for what purpose they were come ; which Herfilia did in so pathetic a manner, that she brought on a conference between the chiefs of the two nations, and the conference soon ended in an amicable alliance,

Privileges
of the
Roman
women.

As a reward for this important service of the Sabine women, several privileges and marks of distinction were granted them by the senate of Rome. All immodest and licentious discourses were forbid in their presence. No indecent objects were to be brought before them. Every one was ordered to give way to them in the street. In capital cases, they were exempted from the jurisdiction of the ordinary judges. And lastly, their children were allowed to wear a golden ball hanging at their breast, and to be clothed with a particular robe, called *Pretexta*. But all these honours and privileges not being thought sufficient, a festival was, some time after, instituted, and called *Matronalia*, in honour of the Sabine matrons. At this festival, the Roman matrons served their slaves at table, and received presents from

from their husbands; sacrifices were then also offered to Juno Lucina, to induce her to assist them in child-bearing.

CHAP.
VI.



FROM a service so signal, conferred by women on an infant republic, and from the peculiar notice taken of that service, it is natural to conclude that the Romans were then a cultivated people, and that their women were treated with all that softness and indulgence due to the tenderness of their sex. Such a conclusion, however, would be erroneous, for they were at this period strangers to every softness and refinement of manners, and the honours bestowed on the Sabine women were only sudden and indigested effusions of gratitude, which did not operate uniformly on the whole of their conduct towards a sex, that nature and obligation ought to have rendered dear to them.

Laws and
customs
restrain-
ing their
liberty.

THE Roman women, as well as the Greeks, were under perpetual guardianship, and were not at any age, nor in any condition, ever trusted with the management of their own fortunes. They were in case of wills, and perhaps in other cases, not admit-

CHAP.
VI.

admitted as evidence. Every father had a power of life and death over his daughters; but this power was not restricted to daughters only, it extended to sons also. Sumptuary laws, generally more grievous to women than to men, as they restrain their most darling passions, were long in force at Rome. The Oppian law prohibited them from having more than half an ounce of gold employed in ornamenting their persons, from wearing cloaths of divers colours, and from riding in chariots, either in the city or a thousand paces round it. They were strictly forbid to use wine, or even to have in their possession the key of any place where it was kept, for either of which faults they were liable to be divorced by their husbands; and so careful were the Romans in restraining their women from wine, that they are supposed to have first introduced the custom of saluting their female relations and acquaintances, on entering into the house of a friend or neighbour, that they might discover by their breath whether they had tasted any of that liquor. This strictness, however began in time to be relaxed, till at last, luxury and debauchery becoming too strong for every law, the women indulged them-

themselves in equal liberties with the men. But such was not the case in the earlier ages of Rome, Romulus even permitted husbands to kill their wives if they found them drinking wine; and if we may believe Valerius Maximus, *Egnatius Metellus*, having detected his wife drinking wine out of a cask, actually made use of this permission, and was by Romulus acquitted. Fabius Pictor relates, that the parents of a Roman lady, having detected her picking the lock of a chest which contained some wine, shut her up and starved her to death.

WOMEN were liable to be divorced by their husbands almost at pleasure, provided the portion was returned which they had brought along with them. They were also liable to be divorced for barrenness, which, if it could be construed into a fault, was at least the fault of nature, and might sometimes be that of the husband. These were some, but not all of the disadvantages attending the Roman women; a few sumptuary laws, a subordination to the men, and a total want of authority, do not so remarkably affect the sex, as to be coldly and indelicately treated by their husbands and lovers.

CHAP. VI. Such a treatment is touching them in the tenderest part; but such, however, we have reason to believe, they often met with from the Romans, who had not yet learned, as in modern times, to blend the rigidity of the patriot, and roughness of the warrior, with that soft and indulging behaviour, so conspicuous in our modern patriots and heroes. But husbands not only themselves behaved roughly to their wives, they even sometimes permitted their servants and slaves to do the same; the principal Eunuch of Justinian the Second, threatened to chastise the Empress, his master's wife, in the manner that children are chastised at school, if she did not obey his orders.

WE have already mentioned some of the honours and privileges of the Roman women; and the following, which we shall add, will shew, that upon the whole, their condition was much preferable to that of the women of any other people we have hitherto mentioned.

Honours
conferred
on the
Roman
women.

IN endeavouring to point out some of the particular honours conferred on the Roman ladies, in periods posterior to these we have

have already run over, we shall not introduce the story of Lucretia, whose tragical exit was productive of so much blood and devastation; nor of Virginea, whose end, if possible, still more tragical, almost overturned the empire of Rome. These effects were, perhaps, more the result of an honest indignation against ravishers and murderers, than proofs of a general regard for the sex. Beauty in every country has had a power of commanding love, and private friendships between individuals of the different sexes, have every where been productive of regard; but when public honours and privileges were granted to the sex by a legislative body, which like the senate of Rome, was too old to be influenced by beauty, or swayed by passion, they were the strongest proofs which can possibly be adduced of female merit.

THE public honours conferred on the Sabine women we have already mentioned; the Romans, however, did not confine honorary rewards to them only, but indiscriminately bestowed them on the sex whenever merited. They hung up the distaff of Tanaquil, the consort of Tarquin, in the

CHAP.
VI



temple of Hercules; not only as a public acknowledgment of the proper use she had made of it, but also as a motive to encourage others to follow so laudable an example. When Coriolanus, in revenge for some affront offered him at Rome, was ready at the head of a victorious army of the Volsci, to lay that city in ashes; when the tears and prayers of his friends, of the nobility, and even of the venerable senate, were insufficient to divert the storm; Veturia, his mother, assisted by the Roman matrons, having prevailed on him to lay aside his resentment; the senate desired that those engaged in this affair should ask any favour they thought proper; when, unambitious of rewards, they only begged that they might be allowed to build, at their own expence, a temple to the fortune of women. The senate, surpris'd at so much disinterestedness, ordered the temple to be immediately built on the spot where Coriolanus had been prevailed upon to sacrifice his resentment to the love of his country; which being compleated, Veturia was consecrated priestess. A Dictator of Rome having vowed to dedicate a golden vase of a certain weight to Apollo, and the senate not being able to procure a sufficient quantity

quantity of gold to make it, the ladies voluntarily parted with many of their trinkets for that purpose. The senate, struck with the unsolicited generosity, decreed that funeral orations should from that time be made for the women as well as for the men, and that they should be allowed to ride in chariots at the public games.

THE sacred function of ministering at the altars of the gods has, in most countries, been wholly reserved for the men; but this was not the case at Rome, they had priestesses as well as priests, who officiated in several of their temples. Besides these, they had a peculiar order of priestesses, called Vestals, who resided in the temple of Vesta, whose office was to preserve the sacred fire of the goddess in perpetual vigour, and guard the palladium*. The prerogatives of this order demonstrate not only the confidence which the Romans had in their women, but also the regard they paid to their religion. The Roman censor had a power of inspecting the manners, and punishing the faults

* The statue of Pallas, which the Romans believed would secure their city from being taken so long as it remained there.

CHAP.
VI.

of all ranks and degrees of people; the two consuls, the prefect of the city, the king of the sacrifices, and the eldest of the vestal virgins only excepted. When the principal magistrates, even though consuls, met a vestal, they gave way to her. Any insult offered to a vestal was punished with death. If any of the order happened to meet a criminal carrying to execution, he was immediately released, provided the vestal affirmed the meeting was accidental. They were the only women whose evidence was received in courts of justice. They were the umpires of the differences which happened between persons of the first rank. They were allowed the liberty of being interred in the city, a liberty seldom granted even to the greatest heroes; and in their hands, as in an inviolable asylum, were deposited the wills and testaments of such as were afraid that frauds and forgeries might be committed by their relations. When the deification of emperors and of heroes became fashionable at Rome, the women soon also insinuated themselves into this species of honour; their statues were set up in the temples, and public sacrifices were offered to, and incense burnt before them. The highest honour



honour that could be conferred on a Roman, who had been slain in the defence of his country, was to be buried in the field of Mars; an honour which, in length of time, came also to be shared by illustrious women. Among the Romans, women generally ate and drank with the men, and in later times were even admitted to their convival meetings; liberties, which in so full an extent, we have not hitherto found them enjoying; they also shared the honours and even titles of their husbands, and in the reign of Helio-gabalus, honours of a nature not usually bestowed on the sex, were instituted for them; this excentric monarch, gave his mother a seat and vote in the senate, and sometime after instituted a female senate, and placed her at the head of it. The business of this august assembly was to regulate the important affairs of dress and fashion, to determine who were qualified to keep a chariot or sumpter horse, who should only be allowed to ride on an ass, who should be drawn in a car by mules, and who by oxen. What ladies should be allowed the flattering indulgence of being carried in a chair, and what sort of chairs they should use, whether of leather, bone, ivory, or silver.

And

C H A P.
VI.



And lastly, who should enjoy the envied distinction of wearing gold and jewels on their shoes. We have no doubt that this senate had full employment in regulating these matters while it existed, but it expired with its despicable founder, nor was ever again established by any succeeding Emperor.

Romans
cruel to
the women
of con-
quered
nations.

BUT amidst all these honours, and all these public testimonies of approbation, we have reason to believe that the Romans sacrificed more to merit than to love; and that while their women shared with them almost every honour and every privilege, they were in general treated rather with the cool esteem of friendship, than with the warm indulgence of tenderness and affection. If the whole tenor of their conduct gives us reason to think that such was their behaviour to their own women, we have but too many undoubted proofs of their behaving still worse to the unhappy captives of the sex, who fell into their hands in war; their political virtue was so rigid and severe, that it never suffered humanity in the least to interfere where the interest of their country was concerned. Hence, in order to aggrandize the Roman name, and strike terror

terror into conquered nations, they often dragged beauty and grandeur at the wheels of their triumphal chariots, and exposed queens and princesses, without regard of rank or of sex, to degradations, and to tortures that even a savage would blush for. Not contented with 'ravishing, they also scourged the daughters of the British queen Boadicea. After they had overcome the army of the Ambrones, their women being in a fortified camp, for sometime defended themselves; but finding they were not able to hold out, desired to capitulate, and required no other condition than that their chastity should not be violated. Even this single condition was not granted by the cruel and libidinous Romans. But we will not proceed to blacken the historic page with a list of such enormous crimes.

CHAP.
VI.

CHAP. VII.

The same Subject continued.

CHAP.
VII.
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THE Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and other northern nations, upon whom Tacitus and his contemporary writers so liberally bestow the epithet of Barbarians, were, in several respects, less so than the Romans, who thought themselves and the Greeks, the only polished people upon the globe; the greater part of these nations treated their women, if not with politeness, at least with a regard superior to that of those very Romans who gave them so horrid an appellation.

IN Germany, when the regal dignity descended to women, they allowed them to enjoy it, and they often governed with a steadiness and sagacity which did honour to the sex, and excited the admiration of the neighbouring nations; the greatest heroes neither disdained to fight under their banners, nor to be regulated by their councils, as they imagined they were endowed with a
kind

kind of oracular wisdom, and a prudence more than human. The ancient Germans, in their treaties with one another, gave female hostages; and by these they reckoned themselves more firmly engaged than by an equal, or even a superior number of the other sex. In their warlike excursions, they carried their women along with them, sometimes even to the field of battle, where their cries and shouts served to intimidate their enemies, to animate their friends with martial ardour, and sometimes to inflame and support them, when ready to yield to superior numbers, or more steady discipline. The approbation of the fair they esteemed as the most honourable reward of their bravery, and for them, as being what they valued most, they fought with the most determined resolution. When they had turned their backs on the enemy, their wives often painted so pathetically the horrors of captivity, that they prevailed upon them to return to the charge, rather than submit themselves to such indignity. A civil war having once arisen among the Gauls, to decide the quarrel, two armies were drawn out into the field, extended front to front, and just ready to commence a dreadful

F f 2

carnage,

CHAP.
VII.

carnage; the women with dishevelled hair rushed between them, put a stop to the work of destruction, and had the address to reconcile them to each other. From that time forward, the Gauls admitted the women to their councils, when peace or war was to be debated; and from that time also, such differences as arose between them and their allies, were terminated by female negotiation; as a confirmation of this, we find it stipulated in their treaty with Hannibal, that should the Gauls have any complaint against the Carthaginians, the matter should be settled by the Carthaginian general; but should the Carthaginians have any complaint against the Gauls, it should be referred to the Gaulish women. The Goths obliged him who debauched a virgin to marry her, if she was equal to him in rank; if not, he was constrained to give her a fortune equal to his own condition; if he had no fortune to give, he was condemned to death; because a woman thus dishonoured, had no chance of obtaining a husband without a fortune; and because it was by marriage only that a state could be properly peopled.

To

To these proofs of the regard, and even of the veneration, which the ancient inhabitants of the North paid to their women, we shall add, that they considered them as having something sacred in their character, as endowed with a foresight of future events, as interpreters of the Divine will in this world, and as a part of the reward of the blessed in the next. “A crowd of beautiful “virgins,” says the Edda*, “wait on the “heroes in the hall of Odin, and fill their “cups as fast as they empty them.” It is worth remarking in this place, that almost every religious system of the East, taught, that a great part of the joys of Paradise consisted in the sensual enjoyment of beautiful women; whereas the Northerners were satisfied with having their cups quickly replenished by them: a circumstance, which plainly shews, that the predominate passion of the East was love; that of the North, drinking.

THE ancient Britons appear not to have been behind any of the other northern

* The Edda is the sacred book of the ancient Scandinavians and other northern nations.

CHAP.
VII.



Ancient
British
women,
how
treated.

nations, in the veneration and regard paid to their women; they had tamely submitted to every reiterated evil, and to every species of oppression which the cruel and avaricious Romans had laid upon them; but when these lawless destroyers scourged their queen, and ravished her daughters, their resentment was kindled, they arose to revenge the cause of the sex; and had their discipline been equal to their valour, they would at that time have put an end to the Roman insults, and extirpated them from the British isles. This superstitious veneration for the fair, on account of their supposed intercourse with invisible beings, marks an age sunk in the lowest ignorance. In times more enlightened, the same causes from which the sex derived this consequence, would have drawn upon them pity from one part of mankind, and perhaps ridicule and contempt from another.

Those of
the other
northern
nations.

THOUGH it appears from what has been related, that the ancient inhabitants of the North, valued and esteemed their women; yet their conduct towards them was far from being uniformly benevolent; while they revered them as beings inspired with a ray of the Divinity.

Divinity. According to the custom of Asia, from whence they originally came, they at the same time treated them as servants, or rather as slaves. Wives and children were not allowed to eat with their husbands, but waited upon them at meals, and afterward ate up what they left. Among the ancient Danes, and several of their northern neighbours, convivial feasting was more frequent than perhaps among any other people; almost every occurrence and business was productive of a feast, where eating and drinking was carried to the most abominable excess. But to such feasts the women seem only to have been admitted as servants, where they stood behind their husbands and friends, supplied them with meat and drink, and took care of them at last when their drunkenness had rendered them incapable of doing any thing for themselves. The German women, like those of the Greeks and Romans, were under perpetual guardianship; but it was generally to the care of some person of prudence and experience they were committed, and not to their own sons, as in Greece. When any person was murdered, the laws of their states took no notice of it; the ideas of civil society were not then

CHAP.
VII.

then so much perfected, as to consider every individual, in some degree, the property of the community. The relations of the party murdered, were only supposed to have sustained a loss, and, therefore, to the relations only it belonged to revenge the death, or to agree with the murderer for a sum of money by way of compensation. Neither of these privileges were, however, vested in the women. They were not allowed to take vengeance, because, perhaps, cruelty and bloodshed did not suit with the softness of their nature. They were not to take the compensation, because they were considered as too weak and feeble to extort it.

In general, the women of the North seem not to have been indulged with much property. The Visigoths were bound by a law not to give more to a wife than the tenth part of their substance. The German women anciently could not succeed to the inheritance of their fathers or relations, though afterwards they were permitted to succeed after the males of the same degree of kindred. But the most subordinate of all female conditions, seems among them to have

have been that of a wife to her husband. A judicial power over her was lodged in his hands, and if she became an adultress, he was allowed to assemble her relations; in their presence to cut off her hair, strip her naked, turn her out of the house, and whip her from one end of the village to the other. A woman thus publicly exposed, could never wipe away the stain of so foul an infamy; the most circumspect behaviour could not retrieve her lost character, nor could any motive ever prevail on another to marry her, though youth, beauty, fortune, and every advantage, combined to allure him.

AMONG the Angles, and many other of the northern nations, wounds and injuries were fixed by law at a certain price; he who wounded a virgin, subjected himself to a penalty twice as great as if he had wounded a man of the same rank. If this law originated from a sense of the weakness and inability of the sex to defend themselves, it demonstrated a legislature not inattentive to their interest; if from humanity, or from love, it shewed in the men

CHAP.
VII

~~~~ a degree of civilization, which the history of these ages, in many circumstances, seems to contradict.

THE mythology of all antiquity is full of female as well as of male deities. The Hebrews, and many of their neighbouring nations, worshipped the Queen of Heaven; the Phœnicians adored Astarte; the Scythians, Apia; and the Scandanivians, Frigga, the consort of Odin. Wherever female deities have obtained a place in the religion of a people, it is a sign that women are of some consequence; for those modern nations where the sex are held in the most despicable light, have even their deities all of the masculine gender. As there were in the North female deities, so they had female priestesses who ministered in their groves, and at their altars. The Egyptians, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and many other of the ancients, offered to their gods human victims; sometimes of the male, and sometimes of the female gender: the Northerns followed their example, only with this difference, that we have reason to believe they never sacrificed any females. Whether females

females were not thought victims of sufficient importance to be offered to their gods; whether they spared them from lenity and indulgence; or from the consideration of the loss that population would sustain by their death, is uncertain; but when we take a view of the whole of their conduct towards the sex, we are much inclined to attribute it to indulgence and affection.

C H A P.  
VII.



As the two leading features in the character of the ancient Northerns, were a passion for the depredations of war, and for the carousals of the table, we may conclude that love held no violent dominion over them; but they compensated for this deficiency by an exuberance of esteem and regard, and formed a striking contrast to the Asiatics and other southern people, who have ever been distinguished by the warmest love, entirely divested of the smallest degree of friendship. An Asiatic, influenced only by his passion, approaches his mistress as if she were a divinity, treats her as a criminal, and considering her as entirely made for his pleasures; is at the same time her tyrant and her slave: while the Northerns, more under the direction of reason, did not seem to have looked on the

CHAP.  
VII.



sex as destined for their pleasures, so much as for their convenience and assistance: they did not view them as the slaves of their power, and the panders of their lust, but as their friends and companions; nor did they approach them with the fawning submission of inferiors, and insolently treat them with the haughty disrespect of superiors.

Treat-  
ment of  
women in  
the mid-  
dle ages.

IN tracing the history of the treatment and condition of women in later periods than those already reviewed, our chief business will be among the descendants of the northern nations; who at length dissatisfied with the cold and barren regions they inhabited, where, on a scanty and hard-earned pittance, they dragged out a miserable existence; issued out in swarms towards the south, and in process of time extended their conquests, propagated their race, and diffused their manners and customs over all Europe.

As the Northerners carried their wives along with them in their warlike excursions, where violence might more easily elude the vigilance of justice; many of the strictest laws



laws became necessary for their preservation, and several of this nature were accordingly enacted by the Franks. When in the field, their operations were from time to time settled in a council, of which their wives made a part; and when in danger of being defeated, they were more afraid of their reproaches than of the swords of their enemies. The men, constantly employed in war or in drinking, had neither time nor inclination to acquire useful knowledge. The women, more at leisure, became more intelligent, and consequently were by the men considered as oracles: they were supposed to be able to interpret dreams; they had actually learned the virtues of a few simples, and therefore both virgins and matrons were employed in dressing the wounds of their lovers and husbands. With all these acquisitions, which at that time appeared so extraordinary as well as useful. With all that majestic beauty, for which they were so famous in the songs of their bards; is it any wonder, that the daughters of the North were the first who inspired the men with sentimental feeling, and with ideas little short of adoration? But such is the nature of man, especially when he is but a few degrees

CHAP.  
VII

degrees removed from barbarity, that while he adores a woman for her beauty, he scruples not to attack and ruin her virtue. Such was the complexion of the times we are now considering. An universal spirit of piracy and emigration had crept into the North: one half of its inhabitants were constantly wandering in quest of new adventures, and of new settlements. Wanderers, who have neither property nor possessions to serve as hostages for their good behaviour, are generally licentious in their manners: hence it became necessary for those who had acquired settlements, not only to secure their property, but also their wives and children, in castles, and in strong fortifications, from these rovers, who were fixed to no habitation, and bound by no law.

It was thus that women first became subject to a species of confinement in the North, not because they were, as is alleged in the South, wicked and libidinous, but because they were beautiful, weak and defenceless. But as it was not jealousy, but a desire of securing their women from the insults of lawless banditti, which was the cause of this confinement; when a woman found

found a lover, or a husband, to protect her from the rudeness and barbarity of the times, she could then venture abroad with impunity in his company. Hence every woman naturally wished to engage such a champion; and every man of spirit, fond of the honour arising from it, as naturally enlisted himself in such service. In this manner arose the institution of chivalry; an institution, which, though it owed its birth to chance and the necessity of the times, made so rapid a progress, that in a little while it was a sufficient protection for a fair lady to have it publicly known, that such a gallant warrior was her declared champion, and would revenge every wrong done to her, whether in his presence or absence: this enlarged still the circle of her liberty, and more restrained the hand of insult and violence.

BESIDES the title a young warrior had to the approbation and favour of her whom he thus defended, there was another, and, if possible, a still more prevailing motive, the love of glory; which, in these ages, was the most anxiously coveted, and most intimately connected with such generous and disinterested actions as defending the weak and

CHAP.  
VII.



Causes  
which  
prompted  
the men  
so strongly  
to protect the  
women.

CHAP.  
VII.

and rescuing the oppressed. Both these considerations prompted the youthful warrior to take upon him an office, which, while it flattered his love, at the same time, by its acquisition of fame, no less fed and nourished his vanity: and as the man acquired honour, added to the fame of his valour, by undertaking to defend an innocent and helpless woman, so the woman acquired an additional lustre, and added to the fame of her beauty, by being thus distinguished by a gallant champion. Thus the honour and interest of the two sexes became mutually blended together, and they reflected additional lustre and reputation upon each other; a truth to which all the historical records of these times bear the most ample testimony.

BUT besides the institution of chivalry, which gloried in defending the ladies from every insult, there was, in the middle ages, another, which no less engaged their attention and flattered their vanity. It was that of the Troubadours, or Poets, who composed sonnets in praise of their beauty, and of the Jongleurs who sung them at the courts and castles of the great. Almost every woman distinguished by rank or beauty,





beauty, entertained a Troubadour; and she who had not that honour, employed all her interest to obtain it. The Troubadour, in many instances, seems to have been a kind of platonic lover, and declared himself superlatively happy in enjoying the liberty of praising and of loving: but being a compound of body as well as spirit, he was not always satisfied with pure platonism, and frequently debauched the virgin or the wife whom he attended. He commonly led a dissolute and wandering life, from court to court, and from castle to castle, depending for his subsistence on the smiles of the fair, and the favour of the great; till at last, chagrined with the instability of both, and disgusted with himself and the world, he retired to a convent, and ended his days in solitude and disappointment.

It is not a little remarkable, that in the same periods in which women were gradually rising into consequence in one part of the Globe, they were losing it altogether in another. While the spirit of chivalry made them objects almost of adoration in the North, Mahomet introduced a religion into Asia, which nearly divested them of every

CHAP.  
VII.

privilege, and of all political consequence. This religion being brought over into Europe, and established in the West by the conquering arms of his successors, not only sunk the power of beauty almost to nothing, but condemned the whole of the sex to perpetual subordination and imprisonment.

BEFORE Mahomet arose to enslave the consciences of the men, and annihilate the consequence of the women, they seem in Arabia to have possessed privileges, hardly inferior to those with which they are honoured in the politest countries of Europe. The law gave them a right to independent property; by inheritance, by gift, by marriage settlement: The wife had a regular dower, and an annual allowance, which with her paraphernalia, she might dispose of in her life, or at her death. To the fortune he received with his wife Cadhiga, who carried on an extensive trade to Spain and Syria, Mahomet himself was indebted for the origin of his wealth and of his grandeur. While his sect was increasing, the women of rank took an active part both in civil and military affairs; several of them strongly opposed all his innovations.

Henda,



Henda, accompanied by fifteen other ladies of distinction, led on the reserve, and contributed to defeat him at the battle of Ohod. After his death, Ayesha, one of his widows, by her influence and address, raised her father Abubeker to be the successor of her husband; and about this period, women frequently mounted the thrones of Persia and of Tartary. But the religion which taught that they were only mere things of pleasure, and the maxims which dictated that they should be guarded for that particular purpose, now becoming general, in little more than a century, they seem to have dwindled from creatures of importance, to beings only consecrated to dalliance and to love.

SUCH were the consequences of Mahometism; but we are not surprised at any innovation that could happen in the ages in which it was introduced. The politics of the Arabians were then regulated by no fixed principles, their religion had disgusted the mind with idle credenda and improbable fiction; nor was this the case in Arabia only, human nature seemed every where in a state of wavering and imbecillity: in Europe, it endeavoured to blend the meek and

C H A P.  
VII.

forgiving spirit of the religion of Jesus, with the fierce and intollerant spirit of war and bloodshed; to mix the soft sentiments of love with the revengeful dictates of affronted honour; and the same tender sentiment which bound a lover to his mistress, instigated him, in the most savage manner, to cut the throats of all those who openly professed either to love or hate her. In short, nothing had at this time acquired any consistency. Religion was a mixture of paganism and superstition, and law was a compound of weakness and injustice. While the pilgrim travelled to Jerusalem to obtain forgiveness of his sins, he was adding daily to the load, by pillaging and debauchery on the way. Religion being reduced to ceremony and penance, ceremony was too weak to combat the passions, and penance gave a loose to them by absolving the mind from the terrors of punishment. Law, if ridiculous in its modes of investigation, was still more conspicuous for being feeble in its power of execution. In such a crisis, something distinct from both became necessary. The men had already begun to glory in being the protectors of such women, as they were attached to by love and friendship: it was but carrying the  
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the idea one step farther, from being the champion of a single woman, to become the champion of the whole sex, and thereby establish a more complete system of chivalry, CHAP.  
VII.  
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As we owe to chance and necessity the far greater part of our discoveries in the arts and sciences, so to the vices and imperfections of society, we are commonly indebted for the rise and progress of political improvements. This was the case with chivalry: it originated from love, honour, and the necessity of defending women in the times of lawless depredation, and had at first for its object the defence of one woman only: afterward, it extended to the protection of the whole sex; and by degrees stretching itself still wider, its object became distressed innocence, wherever it was found suffering by the hard hand of injustice and oppression. Arrived at this perfection, it was considered as the most honourable and exalted of all professions; was eagerly courted by every rank of mankind; nor was any candidate, however elevated in his station, admitted into it, without the fullest credentials of valour, honour and probity, or a long train of
of


CHAP.
VII.

of previous discipline; and even the admission itself was calculated to inspire a love of glory and benevolence. It was performed at the altar, by ceremonies no less awful than pompous, and well calculated to instil into the mind of the young hero, the most enthusiastic love of honour, disinterestedness, and truth.

Effects of
chivalry.

THE effects of this institution, which at last became so ridiculously whimsical, as to be finally laughed out of the world by the inimitable Cervantes, were in the beginning highly beneficial to society. Even war was divested of half its horrors, when it was carried on by men trained up in the principles of honour and humanity. Weakness, which before had every thing to fear from power, and hardly any protection by law, now began to enjoy itself in security, when it found honour, inclination, and strength, engaged to defend it; and as weakness was more peculiarly the lot of women, they were also objects of the peculiar care and attention of this institution. Hence they now began to feel a consequence to which they had hitherto been strangers. They were politely treated by all, because it was known that their cause was

was the cause of chivalry; the virtues they inspired, the exploits atchieved to their honour, the regard they paid to chastity, and their care to cultivate their charms, all conspired to promote their importance. They were approached with submission by the brave; they were the judges even of bravery itself, and entrusted with the distribution of the rewards bestowed on it at public tournaments; where a smile of approbation on the knight to whom they delivered them, was often considered by him as a greater reward than all the glory he had acquired by his invincible arm. The men considered tournaments as the theatres where they were to gain applause; and lovers, as those of acquiring the esteem of the fair. “ Nothing (says a French historian) was longed for by the ladies with so much impatience; and this not so much from the pleasure of beholding a magnificent spectacle, as from the glory of presiding there: it was by them that the prize of these shows was always distributed; they were the soul and capital ornament of them: to animate the courage of the champions, they used to give them a token, which was sometimes a scarf,

CHAP. VII. “ scarf, a veil, a coif, a sleeve, a bracelet,
 “ a knot, a detached piece of their attire,
 “ and sometimes a curious piece of work of
 “ their own doing; and with these, the
 “ knight decorated the top of his helmet or
 “ of his spear, his shield, his coat of arms,
 “ or some other part of his armour.”

To such an enthusiastic veneration of the fair sex did the institution of chivalry carry the ages in which it flourished, that the least contemptuous word uttered concerning any of them, disqualified a knight for the duties and privileges of his profession. When a lady wanted to complain against any of the order, she used to touch the helmet or shield of his arms, as a token of applying to the judges, for a trial of his crime. After proper enquiry, if the delinquency was proved, the hapless culprit immediately suffered the penalty of exclusion, and could never again be restored to his dignity, but by the intercession of the fair, and the most solemn promises of better behaviour for the future. To those in the order of chivalry, this dread of exclusion was a sufficient barrier against indecent liberties and scandalous reports. But the lower orders

orders of men were not to be bound by the filken cords of honour: to keep them, therefore, within the limits prescribed by decency, other motives were devised. The laws of the Thuringians ordained, that he who stole the clothes of a woman while bathing, or at any time threw dirty water upon her, should be severely fined; and that all compositions for injuries should be doubled, when the injury was done to a woman. The laws of the Franks enacted, that he who squeezed the hand of a free woman should pay fifteen sols, twice as much if he laid hold of her arm, and four times as much if he touched her breast. These were powerful restraints on indecorum; and though they strongly mark the character of the times, yet they shew the influence of women, or rather, perhaps, the attention of the men to preserve delicacy, as well as chastity, from every rude invader.

ARTS and sciences, at the subversion of the Roman empire, were almost totally eradicated. A people brought up to obtain every thing by the sword, had no idea of gaining a subsistence by the slow and gradual means of labour and œconomy. Learning was

CHAP.
VII.



for several centuries despised, as mean and contemptible; and a gentleman who had stooped to become a scholar, was considered as having degraded himself for ever. Among people thus circumstanced, nothing was so difficult as to make any improvement: accordingly we find, that many of the middle ages were more stationary than, perhaps, any period in the history of mankind.

Other
causes
which
gave fresh
importance to
women.

AMONG the nations who conquered the Roman empire, the Christian religion had been early introduced; but its peaceful precepts, and even all the coercive powers with which it was armed, were but feeble and unavailing, when opposed to customs sanctified by time, and to minds grown haughty and intolerant by success. It was many ages before it could tame that wild and romantic rage for fighting, with or without cause, for which the inhabitants of the North had been so remarkably distinguished. But though slow in taming the rage of fighting, it produced another good effect more rapidly. Differences of opinion arose concerning it; disputes were carried on to decide these differences; disputes necessarily gave rise to emulation, and emulation to some

some degree of learning. When the faculties of the human mind have been exerted on a few subjects of enquiry, these subjects begin to multiply; and still as they increase, the avidity of the mind in pursuing them increases also: hence, in some measure, we may see the reason, why, toward the beginning of the twelfth century, learning began to be cultivated with so much assiduity, though it had been totally neglected before. With the revival of learning, a new and more rational importance was added to women. Their former importance had been derived from superstition, and a wild romantic spirit of honour: their present, began to erect itself on the foundation of tenderness and sense. Whatever tends to aggrandize the mind, to add to the stock of knowledge and sensibility, is in favour of the fair sex, and makes ours lavish fresh endearments and fresh dignities upon them. Accordingly, in tracing the history of the middle ages a little downwards, we shall find that women, by the remains of chivalry, and the introduction of real politeness, arrived at a consequence to which they never attained in any other period.

CHAP.
VII.

never admitted women to the dignity of the priesthood; but in the times we are speaking of, they made great strides toward it. While Charlemagne swayed the sceptre in France, confession was considered as so absolutely necessary to salvation, that, in several cases, and particularly at the point of death, when no priest or man could be had, it was by the church allowed to be made to a woman. In the sixteenth century, it was no uncommon thing for church-livings, the revenues of abbeys, and even of bishoprics, to be given away with young ladies as a portion. Thus women exercised a kind of sacerdotal function; and though they did not actually officiate at the altar, they enjoyed what many of the priests themselves would have been glad of; the emoluments of the altar, without the drudgery of its service. In posterior ages, women have crept still farther into the offices of the church; the Christians of Circassia allow their Nuns to administer the sacrament of baptism.

WHEN any material difference happened between man and man, or when one accused another

another of a crime, the decision, according to an ancient custom, established by law, was, to be by single combat, or by the ordeal trial; from both which ridiculous ways of appealing to heaven, women were exempted. When a man had said any thing that reflected dishonour on a woman, or accused her of a crime, she was not obliged to fight him to prove her innocence; the combat would have been unequal; nor was she obliged to submit to the ordeal trial; it was inconsistent with the delicacy of the female character and constitution; but she might chuse a champion to fight in her cause, or expose himself to the horrid trial, in order to clear her reputation. Such champions were generally selected from her lovers or friends; but if she fixed upon any other, so high was the spirit of martial glory, and so eager the thirst of defending the weak and helpless sex, that we meet with no instance of a champion ever having refused to fight for, or undergo whatever custom required, in defence of the lady who had honoured him with the appointment. To the motives already mentioned, we may add another; he who had refused, must inevitably have been branded with the name of coward; and

so,

C H A P.
VII.

so despicable was the condition of a coward, in these times of general heroism, that death itself appeared the more preferable choice; nay, such was the rage of fighting for women, that it became customary for those, who could not be honoured with the decision of their real quarrels, to create fictitious ones concerning them, in order to create also a necessity of fighting. Nor was fighting for the ladies confined to single combatants, crouds of gallants entered the lists against each other; and even kings called out their subjects, to shew their love to their mistresses, by cutting the throats of their neighbours, who had not in the least offended. In the fourteenth century, when the countess of Blois, and the widow of Montfort, were at war against each other, a conference was agreed to, on pretence of settling a peace, but in reality to appoint a combat: instead of negociating, they soon challenged each other; and Beaumanoir, who was at the head of the Britons, publicly declared, that they fought from no other motive than to see by the victory, who had the fairest mistress. In the fifteenth century, we find an anecdote of this kind still more extraordinary. John, duke de Bour-

Bourbonnois, published a declaration, that he would go over to England, with sixteen knights, and there fight it out, in order to avoid idleness, and merit the good graces of his mistress: and, to crown all, James IV. of Scotland having, in all tournaments, professed himself knight to queen Anne of France, she summoned him to prove himself her true and valorous champion, by taking the field in her defence, against his brother-in-law, Henry VIII. of England. He obeyed the romantic mandate; and the two nations bled to feed the vanity of a woman. Warriors, when ready to engage, invoked the aid of their mistresses, as poets do that of the Muses. If they fought valiantly, it reflected honour on the Dulcineas they adored; but if they turned their backs on their enemies, the poor ladies were dishonoured for ever. However different in their natures are love and fighting, the former was then the most prevailing motive to the latter. The famous Gaston de Foix, who commanded the French troops at the battle of Ravenna, took advantage of this foible of his army; he rode from rank to rank, calling by name his officers, and even some of his private men, recommending to them their country,

C H A P.
VII.

country, their honour, and, above all, to shew what they could do for the love of their mistresses. Nor were the honours and privileges of the sex altogether the result of their beauty, and of the customary gallantry of the times, they derived many of them from birth-right, and the laws of their country. They held courts, and exercised the civil rights and jurisdiction of Fiefs. Matilda, countess of Artois, sat in judgment with the peers of France, in the criminal process against Robert, count of Flanders. Margaret, the daughter of Baldouin, gave her vote as a peer in the cause of the count de Clermont. And in the reign of Edward III., summonses were sent to several noble ladies of England, to send their proxies to sit in parliament.

Reverse
of this
picture.

FROM what has been now related, many of our fair readers may, perhaps, imagine, that in the times we have been delineating, women were more completely happy, than in any other period of the world. But this was not in reality the case. Custom, which governs all things with the most absolute sway, had, through a long succession of years, given her sanction to such combats
as

as were undertaken, either to defend the innocence, or display the beauty of women. Custom, therefore, either obliged a man to fight for a woman who desired him, or marked the refusal with eternal infamy; but custom did not oblige him in every other part of his deportment, to behave to this woman, or to the sex in general, with that respect and politeness, which have happily distinguished the character of more modern times. The same man, who, in the middle ages, would at the command, or for the defence of a woman, have encountered giants, or gigantic difficulties, had but little idea of adding to her happiness, by supplying her with the comforts and elegancies of life; and would have thought himself affronted, had she asked him to stoop and ease her of a part of that domestic slavery, which almost in every country falls to the lot of women. But, besides, men had in those ages nothing else than that kind of romantic gallantry to recommend them. Ignorant of letters, arts, sciences, and every thing that refines human-nature, they were in every thing, where gallantry was not concerned, rough and unpolished in their manners and behaviour. Their time was spent in drinking, war,

CHAP. gallantry, and idleness. In their hours of
VII. relaxation, they were but little in company
with their women; and when they were, the indelicacies of the carousal, or the cruelties of the field, were almost the only subjects they had to talk of. Hence they could not be proper companions for a sex, who, shrinking with reluctance from indelicacy and barbarity, generally turn their thoughts to softer subjects.

IN the sixth century, while women were defended with the most romantic enthusiasm, they were, at the same time, considered as beings contaminated with a certain degree of pollution; which, at particular periods, was so great, that it rendered every thing unclean which they approached; hindered the operation of medicines, the effects of churning and brewing, and even stopped the growth of vegetables. The surest road to paradise was to abstain from them. They were not suffered to approach the altar, nor to touch the pall which covered it, unless when, by the priests, it was delivered to them to be washed. The eucharist was too holy to be touched by their naked hands; they were, therefore, ordered by the canons
of

of the church, to have a white linen glove upon the hand into which they received it. To all these indignities, we may add one not less mortifying to the sentimental feelings of the female heart; the daughter of a vassal could not dispose of herself in marriage without the consent of her lord, and at his command was either obliged to enter into wedlock un sanctified by love, or to purchase from him a right of refusing to prophane the rites of marriage, by submitting to a detested husband.

CHAP.
VII.

FROM the subversion of the Roman empire, to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, women spent most of their time alone; almost entire strangers to the joys of social life; they seldom went abroad, but to be spectators of such public diversions and amusements as the fashion of the times countenanced. Francis I. was the first who introduced them on public days to court. Before his time, nothing was to be seen at any of the courts of Europe, but long-bearded politicians, plotting the destruction of the rights and liberties of mankind; and warriors clad in complete armour, ready to put their plots in execution. In the eighth

CHAP.
VII.

century, so slavish was the condition of women on the one hand, and so much was beauty coveted on the other, that for about two hundred years, the kings of Austria were obliged to pay a tribute to the Moors, of one hundred beautiful virgins per annum. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, elegance had scarcely any existence, and even cleanliness was hardly considered as laudable. The use of linen was not known; and the most delicate of the fair sex wore woollen shifts. In Paris, they had meat only three times a week; and one hundred livres (something less than five pounds) was a large portion for a young lady. The better sort of citizens used splinters of wood, and rags dipped in oil, instead of candles; which, in those days, were a rarity hardly to be met with. Wine was only to be had at the shops of the apothecaries, where it was sold as a cordial; and to ride in a two-wheeled cart, along the dirty rugged streets, was reckoned a grandeur of so enviable a nature, that Philip the Fair, prohibited the wives of citizens from enjoying it. In the time of Henry VIII. of England, the peers of the realm carried their wives behind them on horseback, when they went to London; and, in the

the same manner, took them back to their country-seats, with hoods of waxed linen over their heads, and wrapped in mantles of cloth to secure them from the cold. Accustomed at present to luxurious elegance, we suppose that such a mode of living must have been hard and disagreeable to the delicacy of female nature. Custom, however, reconciled them to what would appear to us almost intolerable. But there was one misfortune, even beyond the power of custom to alleviate. They were in perpetual danger of being accused of witchcraft, and suffering all the cruelties and indignities of a mob, instigated by superstition, and directed by enthusiasm; or of being condemned by laws, which were at once a disgrace to humanity and to sense. Even the bloom of youth and beauty, could not save from torture and from death; but when age and wrinkles attacked a woman, if any thing uncommon happened in her neighbourhood, she was almost sure of atoning with her life, for a crime it was impossible for her to commit.

WHEN we take a retrospective view of these sketches, when we compare the times
in

CHAP.
VII.

in which women were only treated with romantic gallantry, and strangers almost to every enjoyment which did not flow from that source; with those, in which they share our friendship, and partake of almost all our joys, we cannot hesitate a moment to declare, that the present condition of the fair sex, every thing impartially considered, is greatly preferable to what it was while they were approached as demigoddeses, and in the scale of political society treated as cyphers.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

The same Subject continued.

IN the last chapter, we traced the condition of women down almost to our own times, and shall now endeavour to give some account of the present rank and consequence of the sex. But as it would be a task much too tedious, and subject us to many useless repetitions, to consider this subject in every particular state and kingdom of the world, we shall divide it into three distinct heads. In the first, we shall treat of the most savage and uncultivated states of human life. In the next, of those holding a middle degree between barbarity and cultivation. And in the last, of those where civil society is arrived at the greatest perfection.

C H A P.
VIII.

MAN, in that rude and uncultivated state in which he originally appears in all countries, before he has been formed by society, and instructed by experience, is an animal, differing but little from the wild beasts that surround him; like them, so great a part of his

CHAP.
VIII.

his time is employed in procuring food, that he has but little left for any other purpose; and like them too, his ideas seldom extend farther than to a few sensual gratifications, in which he indulges without reason, and without œconomy: thoughtless of the wants and hardships of to-morrow, and, consequently, but ill provided against them. Among his few sensual gratifications, we may reckon the pleasure arising from his commerce with the other sex: if, in savage life, we call that commerce a pleasure, where, entire strangers to every reciprocal affection, and intellectual feeling, men are totally indifferent what sentiments their female partners entertain of them, provided they submit tamely to satisfying their appetites; and where women regard the men as lords and masters, whom, in all things, they are obliged implicitly to obey.

Of women
in savage
life.

As women are, by nature, weaker than men, their rank and condition must every where be invariably regulated, by the esteem and regard of that sex. The esteem and regard of the men must be founded on their own susceptibility of nature; and that susceptibility must be called forth into action, by

by the mental qualifications and personal beauties of the women. In savage life, unless when urged by revenge, or delighted with the chase, men are dull, phlegmatic, and almost destitute of susceptibility. Women have hardly any mental qualifications; nursed in dirt and slovenliness, with but little ornament, and still less art in arranging it; burnt with the sun, and bedaubed with grease, they excite disgust rather than desire; hence they are not so much the objects of love as of animal appetite; are seldom admitted to any distinguishing rank, and as seldom exempted from any distinguishing slavery.

As in savage states, where hunting, fishing and war; are the only employments, strength and courage are the most necessary qualities: were women sufficiently endowed with these, they might supply every deficiency, and greatly enhance their value in the eyes of the men. By these, however, they can conciliate no affection, nor arise to any consequence; they are qualities not intended them by nature, and they cannot reap the fruit of what she has not planted. In civilized countries, women have a thousand

CHAP.
VIII.

and arts to supply this deficiency of strength and courage, and maintain their balance of power; arts which, with a tolerable assistance from nature, they have brought to such perfection, that they can often engage the heart in their favour, while the head is against them. But in savage life, cast in the lap of naked nature, and exposed to every hardship, their forms are but little engaging; with nothing that can be called culture, their latent qualities, if they have any, are like the diamond while inclosed in the rough flint, incapable of shewing any lustre. Thus destitute of every thing by which they can excite love, or acquire esteem; destitute of beauty to charm, or art to sooth, the tyrant man; they are by him destined to perform every mean and servile office, a fate which constantly attends the weak, where power and not reason dictates the law. In this the American and other savage women, differ widely from those of Asia, who, if they are destitute of the qualifications necessary for gaining esteem, have beauty, ornament, and the art of exciting love.

AMONG

AMONG the brute animals all are equal, and superior strength only, can acquire superior power: thus the bull or the stag who has beaten the whole herd, in consequence becomes their leader. Exactly the same thing takes place among savages. He who has given the most signal proofs of his courage and strength, assumes the right of being chief of the warriors of his tribe; a situation in which he is often not distinguished by any personal ornaments, or by that pageantry and shew, in Europe and Asia reckoned so necessary an appendage of authority. But this right, however firmly he was established in it, does not descend to any of his family. If his son aspires at it, he must acquire it in the same manner as his father. Their women, as we have hinted above, being by nature disqualified from arriving at superior eminence in war, are, consequently, for ever debarred from arriving at superior rank or power. In civilized countries, a woman acquires some power by being the mother of a numerous family, who obey her maternal authority, and defend her honour and her life. But even as a mother, a female savage gains little; her children daily accustomed to see their father treat

C H A P.
VIII.



C. H. A. P.
VIII

her nearly as a slave, soon begin to imitate his example, and either pay little regard to her authority, or shake it off altogether. Of this the Hottentot boys afford a remarkable proof; they are brought up by the women till about the age of puberty, when they are taken from them, and with several ceremonies initiated into the society of the men; the initiation over, it is reckoned manly for a boy to take the earliest opportunity of returning to the hut of his mother, and beating her in the most barbarous manner, to shew that he is now out of her jurisdiction: nor is this a private act, for should the mother complain to the men of the Kraal, they would only applaud the boy, for shewing so laudable a contempt of the society and authority of women.

Slavish
condition
of savage
women.

To support this single evidence of the wretched condition of women in savage life, we have unhappily too many collateral proofs. In the Brazils, they are obliged to follow their husbands to war, and supplying the place of beasts of burden, to carry on their backs their children, provisions, hammocks, and every thing wanted in the field. In the Isthmus of Darien, they are sent along
with

with warriors and travellers, as we do baggage horses; even their Queen appeared before some English gentlemen, carrying her sucking child wrapt in a red blanket. Among the Algonquins and Iroquois, they are obliged to skin all the animals which the men kill in hunting. The Miamis, destitute of the conveniences of Europe, transport their baggage and provisions on a kind of sledges; these, the women are obliged to drag upon the surface of the snow, by the help of belts fixed on their foreheads; tasks which they perform with a resolution and perseverance almost incredible.

In every despotic state, slavery is a chain; the prince at the head of it oppresses his courtiers, they oppress the inferior officers, the inferior officers oppress the whole of the subjects, and every subject oppresses the women. So contemptible is the sex, in some countries, that even an alliance with those of the most exalted rank, confers on them neither dignity nor privilege. The sovereign of Giaga in Africa, does not exempt his own wives from the slavish customs of the country; one carries his bow, another his arrows, a third his provisions, &c.; and when

CHAP.
VIII.

when he eats or drinks, they are all obliged to fall down on their knees in token of respect. His subjects condemn their wives and daughters to toil along with the slaves, and attend themselves with whips and other instruments of correction, to stimulate them to labour. Mamood the Second, emperor of Hindostan, at that time one of the richest and most extensive monarchies on the globe, contrary to the custom of his country, had only one wife, whom he obliged to do every part of his household drudgery. One day having complained, that she had burnt her fingers baking his bread, she desired that he would allow her a maid to assist her, "I am," said he, "only a trustee for the state, and determined not to burden it with needless expences;" a speech more adapted to the patriotic pride of a Greek or Roman, than to the luxurious effeminacy of the East.

THE fondness of a woman for her offspring is so remarkable, that in Scripture it is represented as the most powerful of all human feelings: "Can a woman forget her sucking child?" Yet, to such a degree is the ill-usage of the sex carried in some savage

savage countries, that it even obliterates this feeling, and induces them to destroy the female children of their own body, that they may thereby save them from the wretchedness to which they themselves are subject. Father Joseph Gumilla, reproving one of the female inhabitants of the banks of the Oronooka, for this inhuman crime, received the following answer: “ I wish to
“ God, Father, I wish to God, that my
“ mother had, by my death, prevented the
“ manifold distresses I have endured, and
“ have yet to endure as long as I live; had
“ she kindly stifled me in my birth, I should
“ not have felt the pain of death, nor the
“ numberless other pains to which life has
“ subjected me. Consider, Father, our de-
“ plorable condition, our husbands go to
“ hunt with their bows and arrows, and
“ trouble themselves no farther; we are
“ dragged along with one infant at our
“ breast, and another in a basket: they re-
“ turn in the evening without any burden,
“ we return with the burden of our children;
“ and though tired with long walking, are
“ not allowed to sleep, but must labour the
“ whole night in grinding maize to make
“ chicha for them: they get drunk, and in
“ their

CHAPTER,
VIII.

“ their drunkenness beat us, draw us by the
 “ hair of the head, and tread us under foot;
 “ and what have we to comfort us for
 “ slavery, perhaps of twenty years?---A
 “ young wife is brought in upon us, and
 “ permitted to abuse us and our children.
 “ Can human nature endure such tyranny?--
 “ What kindness can we shew to our female
 “ children, equal to that of relieving them
 “ from such servitude, more bitter a thousand
 “ and times than death? I repeat again,
 “ Would to God, my mother had put me
 “ under ground the moment I was born*!”

* Shocking as this description may appear, it is greatly exceeded by two others exhibited by the Abbe Raynal, in his History of the European Settlements; the one by the Spaniards, and the other by the French and English. We have thought proper to mention them in a note, as they are practised by people whom we do not class among savages, and therefore we cannot, with so much propriety, insert them in the text. Speaking of the first settlement of St Domingo, “ The natives, says he, were indiscriminately chained together like beasts; those who sunk under their burdens, were compelled to rise by blows. No intercourse passed between the sexes but by stealth; the men perished in the mines, and the women in the fields, which they cultivated with their weak hands. Their constitutions, already exhausted with excessive labour, were still further impaired by an unwholesome and scanty diet; the mothers expired with hunger and fatigue, pressing their dead or dying infants to their breasts, shrivelled and contracted for want of a proper supply of milk. The fathers either poisoned themselves, or hanged themselves on those very trees on which they had just seen their wives and their children expire. The whole race became extinct.” In another place, speaking of the slaves of the Eu-

Perhaps

Perhaps this complaint may be a little exaggerated; but should even the great outlines of it be true, they fully evince the deplorable condition of savage women: and that they may be true, appears from many similar instances among barbarous nations.

CHAP.
VIII.

THE Greenlanders, who live mostly upon seals, think it sufficient to catch and bring them on shore, and would rather almost submit to starve, than assist their women in skinning, dressing, or dragging the cumbrous animals home to their huts. In some parts of America, when the men kill any game in the woods, they lay it at the root of a tree, fix a mark there, and travelling till they arrive at their habitations, send their women to fetch it; a task which their own laziness and pride equally forbid. Among many of the tribes of wandering Arabs, the women are not only obliged to do every domestic and

topeans in general, he observes, "That such hard labour is required of negroe women, both before and after their pregnancy, that their children are either abortive, or live but a short time after delivery; mothers, rendered desperate by the punishments which the weakness of their condition occasions them, snatch sometimes their children from the cradle, in order to strangle them in their arms, and sacrifice them with a fury mingled with a spirit of revenge and compassion, that they may not become the property of their cruel masters."

CHAP.
VIII.

every rural work; but also to feed, to dress, to bridle, and saddle the horses, for the use of their husbands. The Moorish women, besides doing all the same kinds of drudgery, are also obliged to cultivate the fields, while their husbands stand idle spectators of the toil, or sleep inglorious beneath a neighbouring shade. In savage countries, women are rarely admitted to the honour of eating and drinking with the men; but stand and wait upon them while at meals, serve them with whatever they call for, and, after all, sit down themselves and eat up the refuse of what they have left; which, unless in times of great plenty, is commonly but a penurious repast. In Madura, the husband generally speaks to his wife in the most imperious tone; while she, with fear and trembling, approaches him, and pronounces not his name, but with the addition of every dignifying title she can devise. In return for all this submission, he frequently beats and abuses her in the most barbarous manner. Being asked the reason of such a behaviour, one of them answered, “As our
“wives are so much our inferiors, why
“should we allow them to eat and drink
“with us? If they commit faults, why
“should

“ should they not suffer correction? It is CHAP.
VIII.
 “ their business only to bring up our child-
 “ ren, pound our rice, make our oil, and
 “ do every other kind of drudgery, purposes,
 “ to which only their low and inferior na-
 “ tures are adapted.” But as revenge and
 not amendment is commonly the motive
 which instigates a savage to correction; that
 revenge is often not to be satiated by any
 thing but death. Father Brebeuf relates,
 that one day, accidentally coming upon a
 young Huron who was beating a woman
 with his club, he ran up to him, and having
 asked him why he committed such an out-
 rage, “ She is my sister,” replied the savage,
 “ she has been guilty of theft, and I will
 “ expiate by her death, the dishonour she
 “ has done to me and my family.” In
 civilized countries, when a relation commits
 a crime, the family though sensible of the
 dishonour, wish to save the criminal. In
 savage countries, the reverse seems to be
 the case. To account for this difference
 of sentiment, would be solving a curious
 problem in natural history,

AMONG some of the negroes on the
 coast of Guinea, a wife is never allowed

CHAP.
VIII

to appear before her husband, not to receive any thing from his hand, but in a kneeling posture. In several parts of America, women are not suffered to enter into their temples, or join in their religious assemblies; and in the houses where the chiefs meet to consult on affairs of state, they are only permitted to enter and seat themselves on the floor, on each side of the passage. In Hindostan, they are not allowed to give evidence in any court; and so difficult is it to shake off the customs of barbarity, that this privilege was but lately granted them in Scotland. Some of the Caribs, who are remarkable for the slavery of their women, being asked, why they held them in so great subjection? "We subject our women," said they, "because they are weaker than us, while in Europe a whole nation of you submit to one man, who is perhaps not so strong as any of you; and even sometimes, we are told, to one woman, a thing of which we have no idea." In the kingdom of Potany, so low is the condition of women, that numbers of female slaves are kept by the great, not to satisfy the appetite of their master, nor to do his necessary business, but to be hired out

out to strangers for the purposes of prostitution. Most of our readers, we presume, are not ignorant of the Circassian custom of breeding young girls, on purpose to be sold in the public market to the highest bidder. But we decline any further investigation of this subject, afraid that if it were scrupulously examined, we should find, that women are in some degree, bought and sold in every country, whether savage or civilized.

To all these indignities offered to the sex, we may add the general custom in many savage countries, of presenting their wives and daughters to strangers for hire; of making them dance naked before them; of divorcing, and even in some places of Tartary, of destroying their wives almost at pleasure*. Such, in general, is the picture


* Of this Dr. Cook relates a recent example, "Some young men belonging to my hospital," says he, "returning home one evening, and having been overtaken with liquor, as they passed by the Kal-muck tents they went in and gave a woman liquor to intoxicate her & the husband not being present gave them opportunities of using what liberties they pleased; in short, it was said she was caught by her husband in the very act. He dismissed her guests without quarrelling with them, put his wife to death, and, next morning, I, with others, saw him dragging the dead body towards a bridge, from the middle of which he threw it into the river."

CHAP.
VIII.

of savage life; more particular figures might easily be added to the group of which it is composed, but we are afraid that it is already sufficiently disgusting to our fair readers, and would not willingly make it more so. Women so oppressed with slavery, and irritated by ill usage, can have no affection for their husbands, and but little for their children; and when an opportunity of shaking off the yoke is offered, it is no wonder that they betray the one, and leave to fortune, or trample upon, the other. This was verified in the women of South America. When the Spaniards first arrived in these regions, the sex soon discovered that they treated them in a very different manner from that of the natives, and while the unfortunate remains of the men were endeavouring to separate themselves from the sword that pursued them, by immense desarts and almost impenetrable forests; the women ran in crowds over the bodies of their murdered husbands and children, to enjoy a consequence and kindness in the arms of the Spaniards, which so much the more delighted them, as they had never been accustomed to it.

ALTHOUGH

ALTHOUGH such in general is the behaviour of savages toward their women, yet that behaviour is not so uniformly of a piece, as not to admit of being chequered with something which has more the appearance of softness and humanity. This inconsistency of behaviour, more or less, takes place in all nations, and is an incontestible proof that manners and customs are every where more the offspring of chance, than of systematic arrangement. Among the Hurons, and Iroquois, though women are in every other respect treated as slaves, such is the power of matrons over their own families, that they can prevail upon them to go to war, or desist from it, as they please; and, if a matron, either with a view to appease the ghosts of any of her slain relations, or to procure prisoners to supply their places, wishes to engage in a war party, one who is not connected with her; she has only to make him a present of a collar, or a necklace of shells, which operates as the mandate of a fair lady did in the times of chivalry, and seldom fails of engaging the champion to take up the hatchet in her favour.

CHAP.
VIII.

 Some instances of better usage.

WHEN

CHAP.
VIII.

WHEN the Iroquois have taken any prisoners of war, the council of the nation dispose of them as they think proper. But such, in this particular, is the power of the mothers of families, that they may, if they please, invalidate the determination of the council, dispose of the prisoners otherwise, or become sole arbitresses of the life or death of such as have been absolved or condemned by it. We have already observed that the dignity of a chief among savages, depending upon personal prowess, is commonly elective. Among the Hurons it is, however, not only hereditary, but descends in the female line, so that it is not the son of the chief, but his sister's son who succeeds him; and if this whole line be extinct, then the sole power of choosing another chief is vested in the noblest matron. The Huron chief is always assisted by a council, and one of this council must be chosen out of every distinguished family; this choice too is the prerogative of the women, and they may, and even sometimes do, appoint one of their own sex. It is farther related by some authors, that every thing among this people is transacted in the name of the women; but those who have had the best oppor-

Opportunities of being acquainted with their politics assure us, that this authority is no more than nominal, and that the men acquaint the women only with such affairs as they think proper, and make use of their names as in other countries one uses the seal of an office.

C H. A. P.
VIII



AMONG the Natches the supreme authority is also hereditary, and descends not only in the female line; but seems to devolve equally on a male and female of that line. The male is called the *man chief*, and the female the *woman chief*. The woman chief is not the wife, but the sister, or other nearest female relation of the man chief. She is attended by as numerous a retinue, and has the same authority, deference, and respect as the man chief; but these are not all, she has, besides, the most singular female privilege that history gives any account of: when she dies, her husband and all her retinue are obliged to follow her into the other world, that they may there serve and attend her in the same manner they did in this. We shall have occasion to mention afterward, that in the East it has been a custom time immemorial, for wives to burn them-

Privileges
among
the
Natches.

CHAP.
VIII.

~~~~~ selves on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands, and for the slaves, and even horses of the great, to be buried with them, in order to serve them in the other world; this, however, is the only instance we find of a husband being obliged to sacrifice himself to the manes of his wife; but even this instance does not so much excite our amazement, when we consider that the Natches worship the sun, and that the woman chief is by them held as a descendant of that luminary; while her husband is but a common, and generally an inferior mortal, whom she marries from the lowest of the people, that she may the more easily govern and enslave him. Something similar to this is practised by the Africans about Zaara, where birth and rank impart to some women a right of choosing a husband, whom they keep in extreme subjection, and even condemn to the most abject slavery, when dissatisfied with his conduct or condescension. The sisters of the Grand Seignior are also generally married to the officers of that tyrant, whom they govern with the most absolute sway. From this honour and deference paid to the woman chief among the Natches, we would naturally imagine, that the condition of  
their

their women should be in general, preferable to what it is among other savages; and we meet with a few anecdotes in their history, which seem to hint that some other females, besides the great woman chief, have particular privileges and honours conferred on them; but however this be, it is certain that the sex are in general condemned to the same slavery as in other parts of America.

CHAP.  
VIII



AMONG the few privileges which tend to cheer the life of the female savage, that of personal liberty is undoubtedly the greatest. The love of savages is seldom directed so much to any individual as to the sex in general; hence they have little jealousy, at least not enough to prompt them to confine their women: but, though in many savage countries they are so far from being jealous of, that they will even offer their wives to strangers; in others, they seem tenacious of the rights of the husband, and afraid of every strange invader. Captain Wallis, in his passage through the streights of Magellan, having sent out a boat to go on shore, some of the natives who were on board his ship, leaped into their canoes and paddled

Personal  
liberty  
enjoyed  
by all  
savages.

CHAP.  
VIII.

after her, shouting and making a great noise. The people in the ship could not understand the meaning of this, those in the boat were as much at a loss, till they began to approach the shore, when they discovered some women gathering muscles among the rocks, who, on hearing the alarm from their countrymen, ran away as fast as they could scour. No people seem more rude and barbarous than the inhabitants of this coast, and yet, from this behaviour, it seems they are not entirely strangers to jealousy; a passion, which, though far from being the general characteristic of savages, is yet in several other places to be found among them. But the jealousy of savages is commonly the paroxysm of an hour, which rages violently and again subsides, till a new occasion call it forth, and not that settled and cautious suspicion of warmer regions, and half civilized people, to whom,

—— trifles light as air,  
Are confirmations strong, and proofs as  
holy writ,

AMONG a people who scarcely possess any thing but the provision of the day, and the  
empty

empty walls of a miserable hut; whose clothes, arms and utensils, are often buried with them; and whose land is either unoccupied or vested in the community, neither men nor women can have much property, as there is seldom any thing to inherit that is worth transmitting from one generation to another. Dignity is hereditary only among the Hurons and Natches; in almost every other barbarous country it is but imperfectly known. Authority is derived solely from personal strength and courage, and hardly attended with any badges of distinction. In polite countries, women share in some degree the authority, and generally the honour of their husbands. In savage ones they share in neither. It is, however, of some little advantage to be married to a war chief, and in some places to be the mother of a numerous family, who can provide for, or defend them when necessary. The privilege of precedence, which in Europe has the power of fascinating almost every female mind, does not disturb the peace of savages, nor kindles up a spark of envy in their breasts. What we formerly observed of the women of the ancient Germans, Celtes, and Gauls, may be equally applied to the savage women

CHAP.  
VIII.Savage  
women  
have little  
property,

CHAP.  
VIII.

women of the present times; they are commonly the only physicians and surgeons, and, in some cases, are possessed of secrets, by which they cure diseases that have baffled the skill of expert European physicians. These cures sometimes procure them a little more regard, and give them a greater consequence than they would otherwise enjoy, but they derive still a greater degree of consequence from a superstitious source; many of them are supposed to be endowed with a supernatural power of discovering future events; ignorance often applies to these, to recover what it has lost, or to procure what it desires; and, however they may be treated at other times, they are sure, on these occasions, to have the liberty of doing and directing as they please.

FROM these rude scenes of uncultivated nature, where the ills that attend female life are so numerous, and its privileges so few; let us now turn our eyes towards such people as, in their progressive state, have shook off the rudeness of the most savage barbarity, and are beginning to advance to a social and civil condition.

THE

THE first step which a people sunk in brutality of manners commonly make towards cultivation, is by beginning to bestow some attention on the future, as well as on the present hour, and to provide against those times of scarcity, to which their own neglect and inattention have so often subjected them; this, a little consideration easily points out to them to be most readily accomplished, by turning from the predatory to the pastoral state; and so having constantly in their possession a stock of tame animals, which they may use at such times and seasons, as they cannot find a supply of provisions in the rivers and forests around them. In this state are the greatest part of the wandering hordes of Tartars and Arabs, who, by pasturage alone, procure to themselves no uncomfortable subsistence. As this is but one step in the progress from savage to civil life, the progress of female improvement has among them advanced but one step also; the passion for dress, a passion so natural to the sex, wherever they meet with the least kind indulgence, begins to shew itself; while among the rudest savages, it is repressed by severity, or even sometimes extinguished by ill usage.

Women

CHAP.  
VIII.



Condition  
of women  
among  
people ad-  
vancing  
from  
rudeness  
to civiliza-  
tion.

C. H. A. P.  
VIII.

Women only dress to give an additional lustre to their charms, and only wish to be charming to please the men; but, where the love of the men is directed more to the sex than the individual, a woman has no motive to excite even a wish of being superiorly beautiful. On the contrary, where love is directed more to the individual than to the sex, where the men distinguish by a peculiar attention the female who has the art, by ornament and dress, to appear more charming than her companions, who are not less beholden to nature; there, the most powerful motive to appear beautiful is held out. The passion for ornament among the Tartarian and Arabian women, proceeds from this source: the men are fond of seeing their wives loaded with finery, and will undergo any hardship, or part almost with any thing but their horses, to procure it for them.

THERE are a variety of places in Africa, and even some in Asia, where, although the inhabitants have arrived at the pastoral state, they appear but a little removed from the barbarity of the mere fisher and hunter; but, wherever they have carried the ideas  
of



of association and civilization so far, as to apply themselves to agriculture, they are in general somewhat more humane, and the effects of that humanity shew themselves in their behaviour to the fair sex. We are not, however, to imagine that this rule is general, but, like all others, liable to many exceptions.

CHAP.  
VIII.



ON some parts of the coast of Guinea, the women are even so far distinguished as to have a vote in the public assemblies; while in many others, their condition is wretched beyond imagination. On the banks of the Niger, the women are generally handsome, if beauty can consist in symmetry of features, and not in colour. They are modest, affable, and faithful, and an air of innocence appears in their looks and in their language, which is inexpressibly soft. Their men, not insensible of these perfections, treat them with an exuberance of tenderness and love, far beyond the reach of the frigid ideas of a northern. When we approach more towards the East, the complexion and character of the Africans become worse. Situated in an ungrateful soil, hardly improveable by culture, they

CHAP.  
VIII.

are obliged to subsist mostly upon the produce of their rivers and their woods; their women have not the amiable modesty, nor engaging beauty of those on the banks of the Niger; their language, like the soil they inhabit, is harsh and disagreeable; and they are to the men objects of but little love, and have almost no political consequence.

IN the island of Formosa, and among some tribes of the Peruvians, daughters are more regarded than sons, because, as soon as a woman is married, *contrary to the custom of other countries*, she brings her husband home with her to her father's house, and he becomes one of the family; so that parents derive support and family-strength from the marriage of a daughter; whereas sons, on their marriage, leave the family for ever. Besides the inhabitants of the banks of the Niger, there are several other people in Africa, who do not treat their women with that rudeness and barbarity, which we should naturally expect from a people so little cultivated. In particular there is one tribe distinguished by the name of *Pholeys*, whose constant maxim is to live in peace; who are no indifferent proficient in some of the arts

arts of civil life; and, perhaps, second to CHAP.  
VIII.  
no people on earth in benevolence and hu-  
manity. Their women have all the advantages of society, and all the indulgence of friendship and of love.

THOUGH pasturage, agriculture, and every thing that brings mankind into society, is generally in favour of women; yet the first efforts of a people in agriculture, commonly lay an additional load of labour on the shoulders of that sex; so that they lose, in the beginning, by an institution, which afterwards turns greatly to their advantage. This is the case in many parts of Asia and Africa; imperfectly acquainted with the cultivation of the ground, it yields them but an indifferent increase; its cultivation, is, therefore, considered as an employment not worthy of the men, but only of the women, who cannot in any other thing employ themselves to greater advantage. Hence, to all the labours which had formerly fallen to their share, are added those of digging the ground, sowing the seed, and reaping the harvest; labours which, in a sultry climate, must be exceedingly disagreeable to the delicate constitutions of a sex, which nature seems

CHAP.  
VIII.

seems to have formed for softer purposes. But we have already had occasion to enumerate too many of the evils to which that sex are subjected; we shall now, therefore, trace the progress of their improvement forward, to that state of civilization, where they are the objects of honour and indulgence.

Of the  
confinement of  
women.

THOUGH politeness teaches us to consider the confinement of women as an unlawful exertion of superior power, and humanity to shudder at it as an unmerited severity; yet we find it practised almost all over Asia, Africa, and even in some parts of Europe. But what seems rather extraordinary, is, wherever it takes place, it affords a demonstrative proof, that the inhabitants are arrived some degrees farther in civilization than mere savages, who have hardly any love, and, consequently, as little jealousy; who, not regarding their women so much as to be solicitous about their good behaviour, set no bounds to their freedom, and are unconcerned about their conduct.

THIS confinement of the sex, which we shall have occasion to discuss more fully

afterward, does not appear to be extremely rigid in the empire of the Mogul. It is, perhaps, less so in China, and in Japan hardly exists. In the dominions of the Grand Seignior, they are more strictly guarded; and in Persia, so powerful is the rage of jealousy, and so rooted the opinion of female frailty, that they have never enjoyed the least degree of liberty. But though women are confined in the Turkish empire, they experience every other indulgence. They are allowed, at stated times, to go to the public baths. Their apartments are richly, if not elegantly furnished. They have a train of female slaves to serve and amuse them; and their persons are adorned with every costly ornament, which their fathers or husbands can afford: in short, their situation, upon the whole, seems so eligible, that lady Montague scruples not to affirm, that they are the only free and happy women on the globe; though we rather suspect, that her ladyship would not have changed her English condition for all the finery and gloom of the first Haram, or even of the seraglio of Constantinople. Notwithstanding the strictness of confinement in Persia, their women are treated with several indulgences;

CHAP.  
VIII

gences; they are allowed a variety of precious liquors, of costly perfumes, and beautiful slaves. Their apartments are furnished with the most elegant hangings and carpets, their persons ornamented with the finest silks, and even loaded with the sparkling jewels of the East; but all these trappings, however elegant, or however gilded, are only like the golden chains sometimes made use of to bind a royal prisoner.

THE Mahometan women, in the empire of the Mogul, are rather of more consequence than either in Turkey or in Persia. Among the lower and middling ranks, they are not strictly confined; and in the seraglio, they sometimes acquire no small influence over the despot, at whose frown so extensive an empire trembles. Noor-Jehan having become the favourite wife of the emperor Jchangire, soon afterward placed her own relations in almost all the principal employments of the empire, introduced such luxury and magnificence, that to use the words of an oriental writer, “expensive pageants, “and sumptuous entertainments, became “the whole business of the court; the voice “of music never ceased by day in the street, “and

“ and the sky was enlightened at night with  
 “ fireworks and illuminations; her name was  
 “ joined with that of the emperor on the  
 “ current coin; she was the spring which  
 “ moved the machine of the state; her family  
 “ took rank immediately after the princes of  
 “ the blood, and were admitted even to the  
 “ most secret apartments of the seraglio.”  
 Such, however, was only the influence of  
 superior beauty, and superior sense. It was  
 not common for women to govern in this  
 manner; though they frequently moved in  
 degrees of inferior consequence. The se-  
 raglios of people of rank, are guarded  
 with a stricter severity than those of the  
 lower order; owing to a mixture of pride  
 and jealousy, which far surpasses the simple  
 feelings of the clown: besides the disagree-  
 ableness of perfidy in his women, the gran-  
 dee adds to it, the stain which his honour  
 would suffer, should any of them be cor-  
 rupted by one of inferior quality; and even  
 these women themselves are said to glory in  
 their confinement, as it conceals them from  
 vulgar eyes; and instances are related, where  
 they rather chose to be burned to death,  
 when their apartments had accidentally taken  
 fire, than submit to the indelicacy of being  
 exposed to public view.

WHERE

CHAP.  
VIII.

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Power of
husbands
in the
Haram.

WHERE so great a number of wives and concubines are allowed, nothing less than an unlimited power in the husband, is able to restrain them from the utmost disorder and confusion. This power is the same despotism in miniature, which prevails in the state; and has the same effect upon the passions, reducing them all under the dominion of fear. Even female jealousy, which, in other countries, transports the soul into the regions of fury and despair, is curbed, within the walls of a Haram. The women may there repine in secret, but they must clothe their features with cheerfulness when their lord appears; contumacy only draws down on them immediate punishment; they are degraded, chastised, divorced, shut up in dark dungeons; and even put to death, according to the degree of their crime, or the indignation they have excited: their friends may murmur in secret at their fate; but there is no redress in the laws of their country, nor does public justice take any cognizance of the affairs of the Haram. Though the laws of Hindostan suffer women thus to be abused, yet so sacred are their persons, that they must not in the least be violated, nor even looked at by any one
but

but their husbands. This female privilege has given an opportunity of executing many conspiracies; warriors, in such vehicles as are usually employed to carry women, have been often conveyed, without examination, into the apartments of the great; from whence, - instead of issuing forth in the smiles of beauty, they have rushed out in the terror of arms, and laid the tyrants at their feet.

CHAP.
VIII.



THE concealment of their women is a sacred tenet among the Mahometans of Hindostan; no stranger is ever allowed to see them, nor can even brothers visit their sisters in private. To be conscious of the existence of a man's wives seems a crime; and he looks furly and offended if their health is enquired after. In every country, honour consists in something upon which the possessor sets the highest value; this, with the Hindoo, is the chastity of his wives; a point, without which, he must not live; and a point which the despot always encourages; as the possession of the women of his powerful subjects, is the best pledge of their fidelity, when without the reach of his immediate chastisement. Whenever the governor of a

Ténacious
of the
chastity of
their
wives.

CHAP.
VIII

province falls under the suspicion of his prince, the first step taken against him, is, an order to send his women to court: if he sends but one, though far from being his greatest favourite, she is considered as a sacred deposit, which infallibly secures his good behaviour; but if he hesitates, or promises obedience at some future period, he is immediately declared a rebel. His affection for the woman whom he sent as an hostage, is not considered as the tie which binds him to fidelity, it is his honour which is placed in her person; and that honour, in case of disloyalty, would be in the power of his sovereign to violate. So sacred are women in India, that, even in the midst of slaughter and devastation, the common soldier leaves them unmolested. The Haram is a sanctuary against all the licentiousness of victory; and ruffians, covered with the blood of a husband, shrink back with veneration from the secret apartment of his wives. Whether this depends upon custom, or on religion, is uncertain; but it is not altogether confined to India. At Constantinople, when the Sultan sends an order to strangle a state-criminal, and seize on his effects;

effects; the ruffians, who execute it, enter not into the Haram, nor touch any thing belonging to the women. C H A P.
VIII.
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BUT in spite of all this seeming veneration, this sacredness of person, the women of Asia are, in general, only a kind of cyphers, held up to be the sport of fortune; educated in a manner that tends only to debase their minds, by obliterating their virtues; deprived of personal liberty; sold, or given away in marriage, without a power of refusal; liable to be seized on as a part of the goods and chattels of their husbands, for their debts; torn with jealousy and chagrin, even their pleasures are joyless, and in a few years their youth and beauty being over, their period of long and unsupportable neglect commences. Solomon had threescore queens, and fourscore concubines; but a petty Hindoo chief has been known to have two thousand women confined within the walls of his Haram; and appropriated to his pleasure only. Strange that the rights of humanity and of population should be so publicly violated! but they are not violated by the Asiatics alone; the Europeans, caught with the contagion, have

C H A P.  
VIII

imitated their example. The Portugeze, after their first settlement in India, became so debauched, that many of them had seven or eight concubines; which they did not confine like the natives, but, obliged them to labour, and forced from them the money they had earned.

THOUGH it appears from what has been just now mentioned, that the condition of the Hindoo women is far from being enviable; they are yet exempted from slavery, and protected and oppressed by a variety of laws. These laws, or institutes, like all others, are so divided and subdivided, that it is difficult to clear up their real or seeming contradictions: this much, however, we may learn from them, that they infuse a portion of the bitter and the sweet into the cup of female life. They ordain that no money shall be lent to women, children or servants, except in times of public calamity, or to a wife to enable her to maintain her husband, while imprisoned for debt; that a wife, must in every thing be subject to the will of her lord, who, in case of disobedience, may chastise, and even put her to death; that a girl must, in like manner, submit implicitly

implicitly to her father and guardian; that a magistrate shall not, in any case, take council of a woman, or suffer her to give evidence in a court of justice; and that all the sex shall be shut up and deprived of personal liberty. But on the other hand they ordain also, that fathers shall maintain their daughters, and that no father nor guardian shall dispose of a younger daughter in marriage before an elder; that husbands shall maintain their wives according to their circumstances; that whatever is given to a woman before marriage, she may afterwards retain as her own, and dispose of, either by gift in her life, or by will at her death; that a man may, with impunity, kill him who endeavours to take away or debauch his wife; that even a slave girl shall not be sold without her consent; that no injury shall be offered to such of the sex, as take shelter in any house in the time of public calamity; that a man shall not go a journey without leaving provisions for his wife, nor turn her away even for her ill-behaviour, without providing her with what is necessary for food and cloathing; and to sum up all, a severe fine is not only imposed upon him who commits a rape, but upon him also  
who

CHAP.  
VIII.

who is guilty of any indecency to the sex, either in his words or his actions. Such are the laws of Hindostan; but from the history of the country, we have reason to believe, that so far as they regard the safety and protection of women, they are but ill observed,

THE whole of the ancient inhabitants of Hindostan, distinguished by the name of Hindoos, are divided into classes, or casts, every one of which rises gradually in rank and dignity above another; and every one of which most rigidly keeps within itself, nor ever mixes, either by marriage or any kind of connection, with those beneath it: hence women have not, as in other countries, an opportunity of advancing themselves by marriage; being obliged to marry into the cast to which they belong: the Hindoo women are not, however, guarded with that strictness and severity, which is exercised over the Mahometans. In some places, even those of considerable rank appear publicly in the street. In Ethiopia, the women are of more consequence than among the Mahometans, or Hindoos. Poncet tells us, that the sister of the reigning emperor, while

while he was there, had a palace of her own, appeared frequently in public, mounted on a mule richly caparisoned, and surrounded by four or five hundred women, sounding tabors and singing verses in her praise. In China, which, for politeness of manners, is little inferior to any part of Europe, women seem to enjoy the rank, and to share in the honours and dignities of their husbands. The emperor may raise to the dignity of empress, any one of his women whom he pleases; and the honours and deference paid to her, are little inferior to his own. But though the empress, and every other lady, are honoured and regarded according to their rank, yet the fair sex are hardly entrusted with any property, and have no fortunes. Circumstances which, though in Europe we may consider as an affront, are, notwithstanding, among the Chinese, symptoms of love and regard. That wise people, solicitous to promote their own happiness, as well as that of the sex, endeavour, by this means, to prevent a woman from being chosen as a wife, on the sordid motives of interest and avarice. A wife, therefore, being constantly chosen from love, and having no separate interest from that of her

C H A P.  
VIII.



her husband, nor any independence to render her undutiful and impertinent, the chain of matrimony, in many other countries made of iron, is, in China, only a filken cord. In Japan, the women of the *Deyario*, or great hereditary emperor and high priest, seem to be venerated and honoured in a degree not much inferior to himself. And in Siam, we have an account, by Kempfer, of a funeral of one of their queens; so magnificent, as to leave no room to doubt that the women are not considered there in a despicable light.

Condition  
of the  
Asiatic  
women,  
chequered  
with good  
and evil.

BEFORE we take our leave of Asia, it may not be improper to observe, that the account here given of the condition of their women; an account strangely chequered with good and evil, but in which the evil, for the most part, greatly predominates, may be materially different from the ideas conceived of it by our fair readers, who have formed their opinions from eastern tales and romances; which, if not contradicted by facts, would impose upon us a belief, that their women were the most beautiful, and the most happy beings in the creation; because the men constantly approach them in  
the



the most submissive manner, while every flowery epithet, for which the eastern language is so remarkable, hangs upon their tongue; and every promise they make, is to last for life, or to eternity. But the reverse of the picture shews us, that they keep in the cruelest subjection, the beings they seem to adore; and while they appear to humble themselves at their feet, are actually the jailors who confine, and the tyrants who enslave them. Even among the Chinese, whom we reckon the politest of the Asiatics, wives are sometimes strangled at the death of their husbands, that they may go and serve them in the other world.

CHAP.  
VIII.  


SUCH as we have described, is the condition of women, among many of those people who hold a middle rank, between savage barbarity and civilization; as the culture of manners, and of the social principle however among mankind, does not always proceed upon an uniform plan, but is varied, by genius, by necessity, and by a thousand other circumstances, we find one nation often excelling another in one or two points of refinement, and falling greatly behind it in others. Thus, in Otaheite, an island

CHAP.  
VIII.

~~~~ lately discovered in the South Sea, the inhabitants, though hitherto unacquainted with any part of the globe, but a few islands scattered around them; though sons of pure nature, and almost entirely fed and clothed by her hand; though without the least knowledge of art, or glimmering of science, are, nevertheless, social among themselves, civil and polite to the fair sex, allowing them every rank and dignity, and even the supreme authority of the island, when it is their birthright; treating them with a deference and indulgence, which the weakness and softness of their nature seems to require; and yet, though they have carried their politeness thus far; though the two sexes constantly live together in promiscuous society; at meals, which bring the people of polite nations together, the sexes in Otaheite are separated. The women sometimes serve the men at their repasts, but never eat with them, or in their company; so that it is presumable, the action of eating or drinking is, in this island, ranked among the number of female delicacies.

It is somewhat remarkable, that over the greatest part of America, which, at present,
may

may be called the native country of savage barbarism, the men have in general but one wife; while in Asia and Africa, where they are commonly a little more civilized, an unrestrained polygamy still takes place. But so permanent and unalterable are the customs of the East, and particularly this of a plurality of wives, that, in all probability, it will be among the last of the chains of female slavery that will be broken; and if we may credit the missionaries, who were sent to propagate Christianity among them, there were none of the precepts of that religion, which they found so much difficulty of making them confirm to, as that of confining themselves to one wife; a restriction which they thought so absurd and unreasonable, that they could not believe it to be agreeable to the will of the great Lord of the universe.

CHAP.
VIII.


C H A P. IX.

*The same Subject continued.*CHAP.
IX.

IN these imperfect sketches, which we have given of the rank and condition of women, we are sorry to say, that it was long before we found them getting into possession of the common rights of mankind; that at present, in more than one quarter of the globe, they are the most abject slaves; and in much more than another, perpetual prisoners: while it is only in that little corner of it, called Europe, that they possess the consequence to which they seem entitled by nature, in the scale of intelligent beings. It is, therefore, with pleasure we now arrive at that part of our history, which leads us to consider their condition in polished and civil society; a condition almost in every particular, directly the reverse of what we have depicted in the last chapter.

Treatment
of women
in Europe.

BUT though the fair sex are, in Europe, commonly treated with an affection and indulgence, which in other countries they are
either

• either quite strangers to, or only enjoy on particular occasions; yet, as all Europe is not equally cultivated in manners, the condition of women is not in every part of it equally eligible,

C H A P.
IX.



RUSSIA, which we consider as an European nation, though comprehending in its dominions a part of Asia, has only begun a few years ago to assume the polish of the Europeans; and is as yet far from having attained that gentleness and elegance of manners, which must distinguish every people before they can treat, with propriety, a sex, whose acute feelings, both of body and of mind, demand lenity and indulgence. The condition of women in Russia is, therefore, much less desirable than it is in England, France, or Italy. A late empress of Russia, as a punishment for some female frailties, ordered a most beautiful young lady of family to be publicly knouted, in a manner which was hardly less indelicate than severe. The same empress, at another time, allowed several ladies of the first quality to suffer the punishment of the knout publicly, and afterwards to have their tongues cut out: while these cruel sentences were executing, they

Disadvan-
tages of
the Rus-
sian wo-
men.

CHAP.
IX.

they were exposed on the backs of men, with no covering, but a scanty petticoat. Such were the Russians only a few years ago; when in every other part of Europe, and even among people whom we call barbarians, the law, when necessarily obliged to inflict punishment on female delinquents, never violated the rules of decency. It has been asserted by many travellers, that a Russian bride, on her wedding-night, presented the bridegroom with a whip of her own making, in token of her subjection; and thought herself much slighted, if he did not immediately make a trial of it upon her person. Later travellers, however, assure us, that if ever such a custom did exist, they could find no remaining traces of it at present.

THOUGH the women at Petersburg are not confined to their apartments, they go little abroad, being but just emerging from a state of barbarity. In their conversation, and their actions, there is hardly any thing of that softness and delicacy which distinguish the sex in other parts of Europe. Even their exercises and diversions have more of the masculine than the feminine. The
present

present empress, with the ladies of her court, sometimes divert themselves by shooting at a mark. Drunkenness, the vice of almost every cold climate, they are so little ashamed of, that not many years ago, when a lady got drunk at the house of a friend, it was customary for her to return next day, and thank him for the pleasure he had done her; nor is it long since the regulations for the assemblies, at the court of Petersburg, contained this remarkable article; an article which, perhaps, is still extant: “And it is further ordered, that ladies shall not get drunk upon any pretence whatever; nor gentlemen before nine o’clock.”

CHAP.
IX.



HOWEVER unfavourable this account of the Russian women may appear, their condition is far from being so despicable, as we might from thence naturally imagine. They share the rank and splendour of the families of which they are sprung, of the husbands with whom they marry, and are even allowed the supreme authority; which at present is enjoyed by an empress, whose head does honour to her nation and to her sex; although on some occasions the virtues of her heart have been much suspected. The widows

Their advantages.

CHAP.
IX.

widows and daughters, as well as sons of military officers, are provided for by government; the widows, if young, are allowed one year's pay, according to the rank of their husbands, by way of a portion; if old, they have a fourth of the pay of their husbands during life, and their daughters have the same till the age of fifteen; when they are supposed to be fit to marry, or otherwise to provide for themselves. The sex, in general, are protected from insult by several salutary laws, and, except among the peasants, are exempted from every kind of toil and slavery, enjoy such portions as are given them, or fall to their share by heritage; and, upon the whole, seem approaching fast to the enjoyment of that consequence, to which they have already arrived in several parts of Europe.

Their
condition
in some
others
of the
northern
countries.

IN the other northern countries of Europe, the state of women is, in many respects, but mean and contemptible. In Lapland, Norway, and Poland, except in some houses of their first nobility, they have hardly even separate apartments. Estates, as well those that are acquired, as those that are hereditary, descend to the children in the following proportions.

proportions. In Poland, a son has always two shares, and a daughter one; nor can a father dispose of his fortune otherwise, without a judicial sentence to enable him to do so. In Denmark, women may succeed as heirs to any inheritance, but no female, of whatever rank or condition, can sell, dispose of, or in any other manner alienate land, but must leave it to the heir at law, who on her demise is empowered to take possession of it; notwithstanding any devise, bargain, or sale that she may have made in her lifetime to the contrary. In Britain, daughters are excluded from inheriting hereditary estates so long as there are any sons alive; but such estates as the fathers have acquired, they may give to their daughters, or leave to them by will, though they have sons at the same time living. In Piedmont, females cannot inherit a fief as long as any of the male line are alive. Though the British ladies seldom enjoy titles or honours in their own right, yet they constantly share in those of their husbands, wives of bishops and judges only excepted; and further, a man of the highest quality, by marrying a woman from the very lowest of the people, raises her to

CHAP.
IX.

the same rank and dignity with himself; whereas no man, however mean, can again altogether reduce her to her original state; the title she had once acquired by her noble husband she retains, by the complaisance of her acquaintance, till death, though she should again be married to the meanest plebeian. English women have never had any power conferred on them to ennoble their husbands, but of late it has not been uncommon to bestow titles and honours on women, in their own right, with a power of transmitting them to their male posterity. In Germany, female honours run in a channel something different from that of Britain, they are only annexed to birth, or attainable by marriage; and on the decease of a husband, the wife, if she was his inferior, descends to that rank in life which she occupied before marriage.

Property,
how far
vested in
women.

As the management and disposal of property, whether in goods or estates of inheritance, is a privilege from which women, in most ages and countries, have either been entirely debarred, or enjoyed under a great variety of limitations and restrictions; and as this privilege is one of those which confers
the

the greatest power and dignity, and upon which mankind set the greatest value, we shall endeavour to give our readers some idea how far it has been granted or denied to the sex, whose history we are now considering.

CHAP.
IX

IN countries where men exist without laws, and without society, there is no property in land; where laws and regulations for society are in their infancy, land is the property of the public; and that public, strictly speaking, means the men only. In the first case, women have hardly any thing they can call their own; in the second, they are frequently allowed to manage and dispose of what is given them, or what they gain by labour. As society advances, they rise in importance, and though in their virgin state while they remain with, and are maintained by their fathers, they can scarcely be said to have any property, yet a part of the substance of these fathers is generally given them at their marriage.

To give portions to women on this occasion, is a custom of great antiquity; for Pharaoh gave the city of Gazer as a portion

CHAP.
IX.

to his daughter, when she became the wife of Solomon, king of Israel. We have great reason, however, to believe that, in such early times, neither the management nor disposal of the portions so given were vested in the person of the wife, but that she, and the dowry which came along with her, were almost equally considered as the property of the husband. The whole history of remote antiquity presents us with a scene, in which women appear too inconsiderable to have acquired any of the goods of fortune, or to have been trusted with them when acquired by their parents or relations. Among the ancient inhabitants of Chaldea, we are told, that the sex could not hold the possession of any inheritance; and the decision of this matter by Moses, shews that, in his time, no precedent had existed of their having any such privilege. The daughters of Zelophehad brought before Moses, the priests, the princes, and the congregation, a petition, setting forth, that their father, after having always demeaned himself properly, had died in the wilderness, having no sons; on which account they thought themselves entitled to a possession among the brethren of their father, which Moses, by the commandment of

of

of the Lord, not only granted them, but also ordained, that in future, when a man died, having no sons, his inheritance should become the property of his daughters. A decision, which seems to be the basis on which the succession of women is, in many countries, founded at this day.

As the Egyptians had the greatest esteem and veneration for their women, and even in many things submitted themselves to their direction; we have reason to believe that they allowed them property, and the right of succession to the estates of their ancestors; especially when we consider that the Greeks, who were originally a colony from Egypt, were, besides the Hebrews, the only people of antiquity, whom we find indulging them with this privilege. The ancient Romans, trained up to defend by their arms what they had taken by conquest, had no idea that women should inherit what they could neither conquer nor defend; but fathers, in time, thinking it hard that their sons should be rich in possessions, while their daughters had none; and that even the most distant male relations should take their estates as heirs at law, contrived to make such provisions

CHAP.
IX.

visions for their daughters, as rendered the estates so taken of little value. The people, irritated at this proceeding, and convinced from the relics of barbarity still lurking in their minds, that women ought not to have any inheritance, passed the Voconian law, by which it was ordained, That a woman should not be left heiress to an estate, even though an only child; a law, which continued in force till the Romans became more refined and softened in their sentiments, when a regard to the weaker sex broke through the unjust restraint, and granted them a right of succession to every kind of property, after the death of brothers,

BARBARITY of manners is almost every where productive of the same customs. So little did the Lombards think women qualified to inherit estates, that, by their law, even the natural children, distant male relations, and the public treasury, might share the inheritance with daughters. This law was softened among the Saxons, the father and mother were bound to leave their estate to their sons, and to their daughters if they had no son. Among the Burgundians, daughters were neither allowed to be heirs

heirs in conjunction with sons, nor to succeed to the crown. The Salique lands among the Franks, seem to have been of a tenure similar to those in the times of the feudal system, held under a lord, for which the tenant was to perform military service; women were not admitted as inheritors, or tenants, for a plain reason, because they were not qualified to perform the military service by which these lands were held; but methods were afterwards discovered to elude this prohibition: he who wanted to make his daughter equal to his son, carried her before the commissary, and said, "My dear child, an ancient and impious custom bars a young woman from succeeding to her father; but as all my children are equally given me by God, I ought to love them equally; therefore, my dear child, my will is, that my effects shall be shared equally between you and your brethren." This Salique law, which in modern France seems hardly to operate on the subject, is still in force with regard to the crown, no woman is ever allowed to inherit it. But though the French will not suffer a woman to sway their scepter, they cannot hinder her from ruling the monarch who holds it; a
case


CHAP.
IX.

case which has so often happened, that, in spite of their Salique law, they have been more under the direction of women than any of the neighbouring kingdoms.

THE laws which preclude females from enjoying property and inheritance have, perhaps, in every other country, but France, been confined to the subject. Among many of the nations of antiquity, among the present Asiatics, and even in some parts of America, where women in general have no property, and almost no political existence; where it was never heard that they enjoyed any land, nor were even trusted with the management of their own persons, they have been allowed, in failure of male issue, to mount the throne, and manage the affairs of a state; an absurdity so glaring, that the only cause we can assign for it is superstition.

Causes
why wo-
men have
no pro-
perty.

FROM the mean and servile condition of the fair sex in barbarous countries, they seem to be rendered incapable of property. Whatever they acquire by their labour, whatever they take in the chase, is entirely under the administration of the male relations

relations and friends, by whom they are protected, and from whom they receive a scanty and precarious subsistence. CHAP.
IX.  Whenever polygamy is countenanced, women cannot possibly enjoy much property: property creates independence; and a woman who is independent would not submit to so many rivals, and so scanty a share of the favours of a husband. Wherever women are strictly confined, they can have no property; any thing further than food and raiment, to them would be unnecessary; and any thing that could not be brought within the walls of a Haram, they could not manage.* Whenever the sex are publicly bought and sold, whether as wives or as slaves, they can have but little property; they are in such cases the property transferred themselves, and consequently in a state too mean to be trusted with other property, perhaps reckoned more valuable than they are. When we meet with so great a variety of causes

* By the code of Gentoo laws it would seem, that the property of women is not only as extensive, but as accurately defined, and as securely guarded as it is in Europe; it is difficult, however, to conceive how this can be the case: how can women who are confined manage their property? It must either be managed by their relations, or the accounts given of it by this code must be false and exaggerated.

CHAP.
IX.



which deprive women of property, when we consider how widely these causes are disseminated, we find that it is only in a few of the politer countries of Europe, that they are possessed of this privilege, and even in those, with such restrictions, that in many cases they can hardly be said to enjoy what they possess. But as we shall have occasion afterwards to treat more fully of the rights and privileges of the British women, which are in a great measure similar to those of the other polished countries in the neighbourhood, we shall not at present anticipate that part of our subject.

Love,
pageantry,
and
show, the
delight of
women.

IN these stages of human society that intervene between the most uncultivated state of nature and a taste for elegance and refinement of manners; pageantry and show seem to employ the utmost attention, and to be considered as the only proper appendages of grandeur, strong proofs of which are afforded us by almost all the nations of the East, and by Poland in the North; the Polish women of fashion seldom visit one another without being attended by a numerous train of servants, carriages, and flambeaus; but when we follow them home, we
meet

meet with nothing adequate to this parade; their apartments are but poorly furnished, and but hardly clean, and themselves are the mean and fawning slaves of their husbands, who, except in the articles of equipage and dress, scarcely treat them as rational beings. In Germany, where the taste is in general less formed than in France or England, the women are more fond of family pageantry, and more crammed with family pride. In Italy, of a warmer temperament, they aim more at captivating the heart than the eyes, and have there, as well as in France, attained almost to an absolute dominion over the men; a prerogative which in Portugal seems much on the decline; for though, in the time of Alphonso, when the Portuguese were an honour to human nature, the man who insulted a woman, or broke any promise he had made to her, was degraded from whatever rank he enjoyed; at present, the false gallantry introduced, authorises him to commit every perfidy of that nature with impunity.

CHAP.
IX.

In England, France, and Italy, and those other parts of Europe which have arrived nearly at the same degree of politeness;

Why
treated
with in-
dulgence.

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prompted

CHAP.
IX.

prompted by a mixture of humanity and love, the men have entirely exempted the women from every species of labour, except what is absolutely necessary among the poor for obtaining their daily bread; and even among them, it is with pleasure we often observe the rustic clown, while he wipes the sweat from his brow, endeavouring to lighten the burden and alleviate the task of the sun-burnt daughter of labour who toils by his side.

So extensive are the effects of politeness in Europe, that it has not only softened the actions and manners of him who, tutored in the lap of ease, has received the polish of a fine education; but of him also who, left to nature, has nothing to boast of but what he received from her hand. This spirit of sympathetic indulgence, or polite gallantry, does not stop at endeavouring to ease the load of toil, or to mitigate the severity of that labour, for which the sex seem to be incapacitated by their constitutional weakness; it expands itself to every part of the conduct of the men which has any relation to them. We give to a woman, even though of inferior quality, the right hand, shew her every

every token of respect, and place her in every situation of honour. We lavish our substance upon ornaments for our wives and daughters, and reckon they reflect a lustre and credit upon us, when they appear in elegance and taste. We are hurt when they behave improperly, and on the contrary, persuade ourselves that their good conduct adds a dignity to our character and reputation. In short, we are so deeply interested in every thing that relates to them, that they may be considered as the arbiters of our fate, and the spring which sets in motion, and continues to direct, almost every action of our lives; such is the indulgence we shew them, and such the power we put into their hands, that a proverbial saying has from thence arisen, that England is the heaven of women, and the hell of horses.

IN France, Italy, and Spain, the deference paid to women is still greater than in England, and generally proceeds from different motives. Here, the honours we confer upon them flow from a mixture of love for their persons, and esteem of their virtues; there, it arises, for the most part, only from a kind of customary gallantry, which seems

CHAP.
IX.

seems directed more to the sex than the individual. A Frenchman, the moment he is in the company of a woman, whether young or old, beautiful or otherwise, declares himself her admirer, talks of flames and darts, and pays her a thousand compliments on her beauty. An Italian, when he is introduced to a lady, walks up to her in the most humble and submissive manner, kisses her hand, and if she is handsome, and of quality, considers her as a sublime being, an angel in a human form, and consequently never to be approached but with the greatest reverence. The Spaniard goes yet a step farther, the whole sex is to him an object of little less than adoration; he retains still a tincture of the spirit of knight-errantry in every thing relating to women, and will readily venture his life to save any of them from trouble or from danger; the object of his love is never less than a goddess, nor does he ever mention her but with all the extravagance that metaphor and hyperbola can dictate. To a woman, above the rank of a peasant, he never presents any thing but in a kneeling posture.

THESE

THESE improvements, in the condition of the European women, at first view seem to point out to us, that they merit and enjoy a happiness superior to all that is enjoyed by the sex in other nations. The external appearance of things is, however, but an unfaithful mirror, whose representation we cannot altogether depend on. Women are in some degree every where the slaves of superior power; in Asia imprisoned, and constantly reduced to act by the impulse of another, without any power of gratifying their own inclinations, their triumphs lasting only a few moments; their rivalry, animosities, and confinement, till death. In Africa and America, the mere drudges of their proud tyrants, they labour to procure subsistence for themselves and husbands, and when they have done, are treated little better than our dogs; *they receive only chastisement and crumbs.* In Europe, for the most part, but improperly, or slightly educated; and at all times kept in a state of dependence, by the restrictions of a severe legislation, which, in the management and disposal of what property is allowed them, commonly cramps the freedom of their will. Dishonoured and disgraced beyond all possibility of

CHAP.
IX.



Considerations on
the treatment of
the sex.

CHAP.
IX.

of redemption, by the commission of faults, which in the men are hardly considered as any thing but acts of gallantry; and even in the state of matrimony, *a state to which they naturally aspire*, more indissolubly bound than their husbands; the law affords them no relief, unless the cruel partner to whom they are tied, has attempted to take away their life; and while he may riot with impunity in adulterous amours, if the wife retaliates, by copying his example, he immediately procures a divorce, and may turn her out without subsistence, to the scorn and contempt of her own sex, who, in such cases, seldom look with pity even on a repenting sinner. In all cases where honour is concerned, even the politest nations pay little regard to the sex. Titles are seldom conferred on women, they convey no honours to their husbands, and their rank and condition reflect little or no dishonour upon them. The Knights of Malta, who are of all mankind the most solicitous that none but nobility shall attain the honours of that order, never suppose this noble blood contaminated by the female side; the same thing obtains almost over all Europe, where,
if

if the blood that runs in the male veins be preserved intire, that of the female is considered as of little signification.

C H A P.
IX.



THOUGH we have marked, as we came along, several causes of the good and ill-treatment of women, yet we flatter ourselves it may not be improper to conclude this chapter with a more accurate view of them. Were we on this subject to reason from analogy, we should not hesitate to say, that there is in nature a principle, which strongly prompts us to behave with lenity and indulgence to the fair sex; as almost the whole of the irrational creation presents us with a picture of such behaviour: the cock, when he has found any provision, calls his hens together to partake of it; and the males of almost all the feathered kind, provide for the females while hatching. Among quadrupeds, though there appears less indulgence, and even less assistance on the part of the male, yet the former is in many cases very distinguishable, and the latter not altogether imperceptible. No male of any species of animals we are acquainted with, will fight with, or use a female of the same species rudely, unless highly provoked; and even then, he

Causes of
the good
and ill-
treatment
of women.

CHAP.
IX.

will correct her with lenity and seeming reluctance. But while we reason on this subject, if we trust to analogy, it will certainly mislead us; for a slight survey of man, in his savage state, must convince us, that he has no natural propensity, nor instinct, which determines him to use the females of his species with tenderness and indulgence; or if he has, it is, like many other natural instincts, totally obliterated in his youth by habit and education. We are told, indeed, by Charlevoix, that some of the savages of North America will, by no means strike, and hardly even defend themselves against a woman; but should this be true, it is only a local custom; for we are assured almost by every traveller, that savages, in a variety of parts of the world, on the most trifling occasions, beat and abuse the sex without mercy.

We have already observed, that power, when not influenced by humanity, is commonly made use of only to enslave. On this principle, we may assert, that the most general and extensive cause of the ill-treatment of women, is their weakness and consequent impossibility of asserting the rights of nature,
against

against a sex so much superior in strength. CHAP.
IX.
 The next cause, is the insensibility of the men, or that savageness of disposition, which not only eradicates humanity, but prompts only to animal appetite, instead of the sentimental feelings of love; a cause which, more or less, prevails in almost every country, and particularly in those, where society and the various refinements thereon depending, are but little and imperfectly known. Men constantly accustomed to gain their subsistence by fishing and hunting, are trained up in the exercise of every cruelty against the brute creation; hence, even the tender and inoffending fair sex are subjects upon which they exercise that ferocious temper, which, from their earliest infancy, has been nourished by their employments, whetted by their difficulties, and which neither religion, example, nor the feelings of humanity, have ever conspired to restrain. Whatever be the original difference in the feelings of the human heart, we know they are capable of being altered, and made better or worse by education and example; an incontestible proof of which arises from the behaviour of the genteel, and common people of England, who must be nearly

CHAP.
IX.

alike by nature; and yet by education, the employments of life, and the example of low company, the latter are often brutal and ferocious in their manners, while the former are distinguished for humanity and sympathetic tenderness.

A THIRD cause of the ill-treatment of the sex is, their general want of proper education and instruction. In savage life, without any engaging qualification of mind, without any ornament of body, they have nothing but sex to engage the attention, and soften the rugged nature of man. In countries somewhat cultivated, as in Asia, though every ornament is lavished on their persons, their minds commonly present a blank; scarcely even here and there shaded with the outlines of knowledge and sensibility. In climates moderately warm, women acquire sense and experience, as their charms and beauty expand. In hotter climates, the body ripens long before the mind; and if they ever become sensible and intelligent, it is at an age when their short and fleeting beauty either begins to fade, or is irrecoverably lost. This is one of the strongest reasons why the women of the East are so little esteemed.

esteemed. In countries, where the manners are finished by the last touches of polish and refinement; the levities, the expensive follies, the irrestrainable propensity to pleasure observable in the other sex, frequently induce ours to treat them ill; and force us even to despise and condemn the heart, which is lodged in the form we adore.

C H A P.
IX
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A FOURTH cause of the ill-treatment of women is, their inattention to the means of making themselves agreeable. This is commonly the case in savage life, where, if nature has denied them charms, they have no method of attracting the heart; and where, if she has not denied them, the possessors have not learned to set a proper value upon them, nor to improve their power by correspondent qualifications of the mind. But this is not a case only to be met with in savage countries, in the most cultivated states of society, we often meet the careless flatterer, who disgusts us with her indelicacy; the conceited beauty, who, trusting to the favours she has received from nature, exacts from us the tribute she thinks due to them, with a petulant presumption, which frustrates all its own intentions; and the hapless wanderer

CHAP.  
IX.

wanderer from the paths of virtue, who, lost to honour and to shame, lays aside every thing pleasing in the manners of the best of her own sex, and adopts every thing disgusting in the worst of ours. To these characters we may add the unthinking wife; who, as soon as she has stepped over the threshold of matrimony, leaves behind her every delicacy, and strives not to retain the husband, by the arts with which she engaged the lover.

IN polite countries, women reckon themselves ill-treated, if they are not honoured, accosted with respect, and even their wishes prevented by all the nameless little offices of good-breeding: accustomed to be constantly approached, with an air of submission that borders on adoration, to be constantly flattered, on account of their beauty and accomplishments, and wanting sagacity to distinguish mere gallantry from the real sentiments of the heart, they at last become pert and assuming, and often rude and ill-natured to such as they think do not offer a sufficient quantity of the incense of praise, at the shrine of their beauty. Having arrived this length, they soon become objects  
of

of contempt, and sometimes of ill-treatment. No class of females are so apt to fall into this tract as those called beauties; who, though eagerly sought after by the men at every place of public amusement, are not so eagerly solicited to retire with them into that private scene of domestic life, where the mask must be laid aside, and the train of flatterers for ever discarded.

CHAP.  
IX

THE power of appropriating entirely to ourselves what we love and esteem, is so deeply rooted in our nature, that it has given birth to jealousy, one of the strongest passions that convulse the soul; and from this jealousy arises another fruitful source of the ill-treatment of women. It is the cause that has, time immemorial, shut them up in the gloom of perpetual imprisonment, and debarred them in the East from every joy that can flow from friendship and society. It is the cause which, in Hindostan, and more particularly in Persia, has subjected them not only to the chastisement of an enraged husband; but even to death itself, for an offence no greater than looking at a stranger. But we turn from such scenes of horror, to view the other side of the picture.

THE

CHAP.  
IX.

Causes of  
the good  
treatment  
of women.

THE general causes of the proper treatment of women are simple, and may be all comprehended in the education of the one sex, and the behaviour of the other. It is want of education and instruction, that makes the savage; and it is the proper application of them, that form the man of society and the gentleman. A man brought up in any of the polite countries of Europe, is, from his earliest infancy, taught to do a thousand good offices to the fair sex; to honour and indulge them; and, as he grows up, to provide for, and defend them: hence every kindness, and every duty he can perform to them, are so imperceptibly interwoven with his nature, that he takes them for nature itself: but lest this attachment of education should not be strong enough to form a kind of balance of power between the two sexes, the Author of nature has wisely provided, that, at a certain age, love should spring up to lend its assistance, and add a motive still more powerful, than even custom and education, to induce us to do the fair sex every kind and indulgent office, which the delicacy of their situation, and the weakness of their nature, may stand in need of. But we must here carefully distinguish



guish between that love, which, in civil life, CHAP.  
IX. is a mixture of animal appetite and sentimental feeling; and that which, in savage life, is animal appetite only. The last, though it may prompt by its immediate impulse, to be fawning and complaisant, is but short and inconstant in its operations; and, consequently, unable to restrain the rudeness and oppression of the men, or raise the women to any degree of consequence and dignity. The first, more steady and uniform, inspires with an unremitting attention to do good offices, with a generosity of sentiment, and with an inclination to protect, and screen from oppression the weakness which savages despise. Nor are the fair regarded and defended only by such individuals as are connected with them by love, friendship, and other motives of passion and interest, but by the generality of men in civil life, from sentiments of gallantry; and by every wise legislature, which, in proportion to the weakness of that sex, exerts itself the more strenuously to protect their persons and interests.

SUCH, and many more, are the happy effects which the fair sex experience from

CHAP.  
IX.

education and from love; but in the individuals, with whom they are more nearly connected, good sense, and humanity of temper, are likewise necessary, in order to secure them from ill-usage. There are in domestic life, a thousand little incidents where sentiments will unavoidably jar; but should even this happen so frequently, as to interrupt all peace, and be productive of a constant acrimony of temper, a man of sense, when connected with a woman whom he cannot love in his heart, will never degrade himself so as to use her ill; and will be sorry that he is obliged to pity, where he would wish to love.

THAT propriety of female behaviour, which inclines the men to favour, and treat the sex with the greatest indulgence, is of various kinds, and would be tedious to run over. In savage countries, it consists mostly in performing the tasks of labour assigned them; in yielding the most abject submission to their husbands; and taking proper care of the children they have by them. In the East, it consists in resigning themselves with a seeming alacrity to confinement; being perfectly skilled in all the arts of pleasing,  
and

and avoiding, with the utmost circumspection, every cause of jealousy. In Europe it is more unlimited; it consists in good-nature, sensibility, delicacy, chastity, the domestic virtues, and a thousand other qualities; which, when joined to a competent share of beauty and female softness, are almost sufficient to soothe the most rugged nature, and change the cruelest temper into gentleness and humanity.

CHAP.  
IX.

## C H A P. X.

*Of the Character and Conduct of Women.*

CHAP.  
X  
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AS the actions of women are generally confined within a more narrow circle than those of the men, so their good or bad character is also, for the most part, comprised under fewer virtues and vices. In the East, where they are by confinement totally excluded from action and observation, we may say with Pope, That they have hardly any character at all.

AT the head of the qualities, which make up the good or bad character of each sex, there is generally placed some cardinal virtue, or vice; which is set, as it were, in the fore-ground; and to which all the rest of the figures in the group are subordinate. Thus, what is the most highly esteemed in the men, is courage and sensibility. What gives the highest lustre and polish to the women, is modesty, joined to that soft and gentle temper, which is ever ready to sooth affliction, and to pity distress. As these two  
virtues


virtues form the great outlines of the character of the fair sex, a large portion of what we have to say on the present subject, will necessarily be employed in inquiring, how far they have cultivated them, or deviated into their opposite vices.

CHAP.  
X.



IN the earlier ages of antiquity, if we may reason from the nature of our passions, from the imperfection of society, and the want and weakness of human laws, we may conclude that modesty and chastity were virtues not sedulously attended to. The reasons assigned for the destruction of the world by the deluge; for the posterior destruction of Sodom; and the conduct of Lot's daughters, are all too evident proofs of this conclusion. Proceeding forward to the patriarchal ages, the scene is but little altered; for we there find, that when Abraham had gone down to Egypt to avoid a famine, he had such an opinion of the dissoluteness of the people of that country, that he was afraid they would murder him, in order to get possession of his wife; and to avoid that danger, agreed with her to say, that she was his sister: a falsity and meanness, which he again repeated, when he afterwards journeyed with her

Unchastity  
an early  
vice in the  
world.

CHAP. her in Gerar. This pusilanimous example  
 X.  was likewise copied by his son Isaac, when he went with Rebecca, his wife, into the same country of Gerar; and the speech of Abimelech to Isaac, on finding that he had deceived him, plainly points out the ideas they then entertained of debauchery; “one  
 “ of the people might lightly have lain  
 “ with her.”

THE severe revenge, however, taken on the Sechemites, for the rape of Jacob's daughter, seems to insinuate, that the Israelites paid no little regard to the chastity of their women; at least to those that were of her rank and condition; though the answer these avengers made to their father Jacob, when he reproved them for their cruel perfidy, plainly shews us, that public prostitution was in that simple and early period far from being unknown. “Should he deal  
 “ with our sister, (said they) as with an har-  
 “ lot?” And we are sorry to observe, from the adventure of Judah, with Tamar, his daughter-in-law, who had personated an harlot, in order to force him to procure her a second husband, that, in his days, the character in which she appeared, seems neither  
 to

to have been uncommon, nor attended with CHAP.  
X.  
any great degree of infamy. In periods so exceedingly remote as these we are now delineating, the general conduct of the Hebrew women, with regard to chastity, seems extremely uncertain. We may, however, with great propriety, lay it down as a rule, that the virtues and vices of the two sexes always keep nearly an equal pace with each other; and as the patriarchs themselves were no way famous for continence, we cannot reasonably expect that their women were distinguished by this virtue: nor in alleging this, is there any injustice done to the patriarchs, it is too well confirmed by the ancient history of the Jewish nation; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had all of them several concubines as well as wives. David rioted in concubinage, and even in adultery; nor seems to have been checked in either, till he also became a murderer. Solomon set no bounds to his appetite; and, from every neighbouring nation, selected a numerous train of women; among whom he spent a great part of his time in the most voluptuous debauchery.

CHAP.  
X.Not re-  
markable  
for huma-  
nity.

IF the women, in the times we are speaking of, were not remarkable for chastity, we have scarcely any better reason to think that they were more conspicuous for the sympathetic tenderness of the sex. Sarah, in a cruel manner, turned out the concubine and child of her husband, almost without provision, into a desert and inhospitable country; where, without the interposition of providence, they must have perished of hunger; nor was she instigated by jealousy to this barbarous deed; it was the common custom to have concubines, and she herself had given Hagar to her husband. Jael, in cool blood, drove a nail into the temple of Sisera, to whom she had promised protection, and perfidiously slew him as he lay asleep in her tent. Delilah, a Philistine, who was married to Sampson, treacherously betrayed the husband of her bosom. But not to draw the character of a whole people from single instances, it was customary among the nations which surrounded the Israelites, to sacrifice human victims to their idols. The Tyrian, Phœnician, and Carthaginian women, not only attended at these sacrifices, but even mothers carried their own children to be offered to Saturn, embraced



braced and consigned them to the devour-  
 ing flames ; and if at any time instigated by  
 humanity, they dropped a tear over them,  
 the sacrifice was by the priests declared to  
 be unacceptable to the god. Even the Is-  
 raelites themselves imitated the example, and  
 parents of both sexes, attended while their  
 infants passed through the fire to Molech.  
 These, and several other instances we could  
 give, plainly demonstrate, that both sexes  
 were in those days distinguished for a bru-  
 tality of temper, to which nothing but a  
 mistaken religion could have given birth.

THE character of the other nations in the  
 remote periods we are now considering, was  
 perhaps still less famous for purity of female  
 manners than that of the Jews. In Egypt,  
 the story of Potiphar's wife, presents us with  
 an almost unparalleled instance of female  
 effrontery. But as it would be unjust to  
 condemn a whole people for the impudence  
 and lewdness of one woman, let us look  
 into their history, a history which will too  
 amply convince us, that the proofs of female  
 debauchery were far from being confined to  
 this single instance.

CHAP.  
X.

king of Egypt, having lost his sight, consulted the oracle, and was told that he should be recovered by washing his eyes with the urine of a woman, that had never known any man besides her own husband; after a great many unsuccessful trials, he at last obtained his wish, by applying to an humble cottager, whose poverty and obscurity had secured her from temptation; and having rewarded her in an ample manner, he put to death all the others who had so miserably disappointed his hopes. Chemmis, another of their kings, who is said to have erected the largest Egyptian pyramid, being at a loss how to procure materials for carrying on so extraordinary a work, at last, considering how much the people were given to debauchery, ordered his own daughter to become a prostitute, and to demand that each of her paramours should bring a large stone, to be employed in the building carried on by her father; these stones she collected in such numbers, that they were found not only sufficient to finish the great pyramid already begun, but with the remainder she erected a small one to her own memory. Though both these stories carry along with them


them the most evident marks of fable; yet, C H A P.  
X.  
~~~~~  
as fable was so frequently made use of in the East, to convey instruction or reproof, they might nevertheless be highly characteristic of the manners of the times. Besides, if we may form any judgment of the character of a nation from its customs and religious ceremonies, which, if we may be allowed the expression, are the truest pictures of its heart, they will teach us to entertain but a low opinion of the decency and decorum of the ancient Egyptian women.

THE Egyptians several times every year celebrated a festival of Diana, at Bubaste, to which they commonly went by water; and the boats being promiscuously crowded with men and women, when they passed near any town or village, they stopped, in order to give an opportunity to the women on board to make a trial of skill with these on shore, in the most obscene language and gesticulations; when, after a variety of these indecent and ridiculous altercations, they at last arrived at the place of their destination, they celebrated the festival in honour of their goddess, by rites which would have dishonoured the vilest of the race of mortality,

X x 2

CHAP. ^X tality, by drinking, rioting, and committing
 ~~~~~ such debaucheries, that ancient authors have  
 been ashamed fully to describe them. Among  
 other nations we find but too many exam-  
 ples of men endeavouring to debauch their  
 women when living; the Egyptians afford  
 us the only one we meet with, where they  
 sacrilegiously defiled themselves with them  
 when dead. It was a custom in this coun-  
 try, immediately after death, to deliver the  
 body to the embalmers, to be by them pre-  
 pared for burial; but young women of great  
 beauty were at last, contrary to this custom,  
 obliged to be kept till the symptoms of pu-  
 trefaction began to appear, lest the embalm-  
 ers, as had sometimes happened, should abuse  
 their dead bodies.

NOTWITHSTANDING this public licen-  
 tiousness, the laws of Egypt seem not to  
 have been in the fault, but a general corrup-  
 tion of manners had set them at defiance.  
 Nor were the civil laws only well calculated  
 for the preservation of chastity, and securing  
 the weaker sex from every insult upon their  
 honour, but those of religion also conspired  
 to assist them. The Egyptians seem to have  
 been the first among the ancients who paid a  
 proper

proper respect to the temples of their gods, CHAP.  
X.  
The neighbouring nations polluted them   
with every species of lust and intemperance.  
The Egyptians hallowing them, ordained  
that men should religiously abstain from wo-  
men within their sacred walls,

WE have already mentioned some causes which have overcome the natural propensity of women to preserve their own off-spring; to these already taken notice of, we shall now add, that this has in Egypt been done by superstition, in Greece and Rome, by a romantic patriotism. The Egyptian women rejoiced when their children were devoured by their sacred crocodiles. The Greeks and Romans, when they were slain in the wars, undertaken to defend or enlarge their country. Would we were able to say, that in modern times this propensity did not often yield to causes more frivolous and not less culpable. The religious character of the Egyptian women can only be drawn from that of their men, Those were superstitious almost beyond a possibility of belief. They worshipped animals of every kind; they even paid an extravagant degree of adoration to the vilest of reptiles and insects; and  
what

CHAP. <sup>X</sup> what is not a little extraordinary, the animal  
 ~~~~~ that was adored and worshipped in one district, was frequently held in the utmost abomination in another. As women have been in all countries less apt to examine and reason upon matters, than men, they have ever been more credulous and superstitious; we may therefore suppose that every whimsical extravagance in the Egyptian religion, had the women in general as its votaries.

Motives
 to induce
 good be-
 haviour in
 Egypt.

IN no country were there ever such powerful motives devised to oblige people to preserve an untainted character as in Egypt. It is well known to our learned readers, how much the honours of sepulture were valued among the ancients, and how pittiabie they imagined the situation of that soul whose body lay unburied. The Egyptian legislature, availing itself of this universal prejudice, ordained, That no person should obtain burial, till his conduct, while living, had been scrupulously examined; for this purpose, the corpse was ordered to be carried into an island in the lake Moeris, where the people sat as judges upon it, and decreed, or denied it burial, according as the character came out good or bad. The boatman
 who

who was first employed in carry dead bodies over to this solemn trial, being named Charon, has give origin to the poetical fable of Charon ferrying souls over the Styx, or from this world to the next. From the few scattered hints of the Egyptians, which have reached our times, we can with little certainty say any more of their character or conduct; so different are the accounts we meet with concerning them, some affirming that the women did all the business without doors, while the men confined themselves within; others asserting, that the men confined all their women from jealousy, and never allowed them the use of shoes, that they might not be able to walk abroad.

CHAP.
X

IN times of remote antiquity, that modesty, which we now consider as the chief ornament of the female character, does not appear to have been much regarded by either sex. At Babylon, the capital of the Assyrian empire, it was so little valued, that a law of the country even obliged every woman to forfeit her title to it: This unparalleled law, the only one in the annals of mankind, that ever forced the virtuous part of the sex to prostitution, ordained,

That


Prostitution established
by a law
at Babylon.

CHAP.
X.

That every woman should once in her life repair to the temple of Venus, having her head crowned with flowers, and there wait till some stranger performed with her the rites sacred to the goddess of debauchery. When the stranger accosted the object of his choice, he was obliged to present her with some pieces of money, nor was she at liberty to refuse either these, or the request of the stranger who offered them, whatever was the value of the money, or however mean or disagreeable the donor. This preliminary being settled, they retired together to fulfil the law. After which the woman returned and offered to the goddess the sacrifice prescribed by custom, and then was at liberty to return home. Customs something similar to this were observed in some other countries, though they had not the sanction of a law. The young women of Cyprus went at stated times and prostituted themselves upon the sea shore, as the most acceptable service they could render to Venus; and several of their neighbours thought it expedient, that a certain number of virgins should be every year prostituted, as a bribe to induce that goddess to save the chastity of the rest.

WHEN

WHEN a woman had once entered the temple of Venus, she was not allowed to depart from it till she had fulfilled the law; and it frequently happened that those to whom nature had been less-indulgent than to others, remained there a long time before any person offered to perform with them the condition of their release. A custom, we think, sometimes alluded to in scripture, and expressly delineated in the book of Baruch: "The women also, with chords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume; but, if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken." Though this infamous law was at first strictly observed by all the women of Babylon; yet it would seem that, in length of time, they grew ashamed of, and in many cases dispensed with it; for we are informed that women of superior rank, who were not willing literally to fulfil the law, were allowed a kind of evasion; they were carried in litters to the gates of the temple, where, having dismissed all their attendants, they entered alone, presented themselves before the statue of the goddess, and re-

CHAP. turned home. Possibly this was done by
 X.  the assistance of a bribe, to those who had
 the care of the temple.

Reflec-
 tions on
 this law.

It has been alleged by some of these authors, who can find nothing in antiquity but virtue and excellence, that the oracle which instituted this law, considering Venus as a goddess who delighted in debauchery, meant thereby to induce her to preserve, during the rest of their lives, the innocence of such women as had once voluntarily dedicated themselves to her service; and that it further intended to raise in the minds of their women a detestation of unchastity, by the shame of exposing themselves to so public a prostitution. But whatever may be said in its justification, a law of this kind is in its nature indefensible, and, from whatever motive it proceeded, must have been but ill calculated to promote virtue; for such is the disposition of human nature, that the barrier, which separates between vice and virtue, once overleaped, it from that moment loses half its restrictive power, and in a little time becomes no barrier at all. It appears, therefore, that no degree of credit is due to Herodotus, when he affirms that
 the

the Babylonish women having once fulfilled the obligation imposed upon them by this law, could never after be prevailed upon to deviate from the path of rectitude; nor to Ælian, who would persuade us, that those of Lydia and Cyprus, whose custom it was not to marry till they had gained a fortune suitable to their rank, by prostitution, were for ever after inflexibly virtuous.

CHAP.
X.



SUCH assertions are too absurd to be credited by an impartial observer of human nature; and, besides, are every where falsified by the conduct of the Babylonish women. The sacred writings of the prophets abound with reproaches against them for their lewdness and debauchery; but not to rest the validity of what we have said entirely on that foundation. The same Herodotus, who had told us of the inviolable chastity of the Babylonish women, informs us a little after, that when their city was taken by Cyrus, such was the licentiousness of the place, that fathers, without any scruple, prostituted their daughters for hire. Quintus Curtius not only confirms the same thing, but adds, that even husbands were not ashamed on that occasion to deliver their wives to strangers

CHAP.
X.

for money ; actions which are in no respect consonant to the virtuous character pretended by some to be derived from the vicious source of public prostitution. Were it necessary to multiply proofs of the licentious character of the Babylonian women, we could instance the prodigious number of courtezans, which were among them, whose profession did not render them contemptible in the public opinion, as it always does where virtue and modesty prevail. The drunkenness of the sex, who used frequently to attend the convival meetings of the men, where, themselves not less convival, they often ate, drank, and made merry, till by degrees divesting themselves of all modesty, they sometimes finished the debauch in the original dress of nature. Nor was this the practice of the meanest, nor of the most lewd and abandoned of the sex only, it was that of women of all ranks and conditions. But we cannot wonder at finding a people lewd and debauched, when the divinities they worshipped, the religion they practised, and the public example, all conspired to make them so. When vice and immorality are able to make such progress in societies ; where they are opposed by law, and restrained

strained by religion, what may we not expect them to do? Where prompted and encouraged, as among the Babylonians, by both.

CHAP.
X.




BUT the Babylonians were not the only people of antiquity led astray in this manner; there scarcely existed one single religion, in the times we are speaking of, the rites of which were not solemnized either with cruelty or debauchery; and scarcely was there one god or goddess adored, who was not famous for lust and intrigue. Such, in a notorious degree, was Jupiter, the greatest of the deities. Such was Vulcan. Such was Venus, and such the great Syrian goddess, whose temples were constantly crowded with the votaries of lust, and of debauchery. But rites of cruelty and debauchery were naturally enough suggested as proper modes of worshipping divinities, who delighted in uncleanness and in blood.

THIS corruption of manners reigned but too universally among the ancients. The Massagetæ, a people of Scythia, being confined to one wife, while the nations around them were indulged with the liberty of polygamy and concubinage; in order to put them-

Of the
Massagetæ
and
Lydians.

CHAP.
X.

themselves in some degree on a footing with their neighbours, introduced a kind of community of wives, and a man who had an inclination to the wife of his friend, only carried her into his waggon or hut, and hung up a quiver while she was there, as a sign, that they might not be interrupted. In this manner were decency and the most sacred ties of matrimony publicly violated; but what decency, what regard to the most solemn institutions could we expect in a people who were so rude and barbarous, that when any of their relations became old, they sacrificed them to their gods, along with some cattle set apart for that purpose; then having boiled together the flesh of the human and the more ignoble victims, they devoured the whole as a most delicious repast? The Lydians were still more debauched than the Massagetæ. In the reign of Jardanes, so ungovernable was their lust, that Omphale, the king's only daughter, could scarcely, even within the walls of the royal palace, find shelter from the licentious multitude. Omphale at length succeeding to the throne of her father, punished with the utmost severity, such as had formerly insulted her. On the women, whom it appears she considered

sidered as not less criminal than the men, CHAP.
X.
 she revenged herself in a singular manner; 
 she ordered, that, over all her kingdom, they
 should be shut up with their slaves.

THE Scythians, whose character is: Of the
Scythians.
 far from being the most abandoned of the an-
 cients, seem not to have had much cause to
 boast of the chastity and fidelity of their
 women. The greatest part of their men
 having on some occasion made an expedition
 into Asia, were detained there much beyond
 their expectation, when their wives, either
 impatient of their long absence, or despair-
 ing of their return, took their servants and
 slaves, and invested them in all the posses-
 sions and privileges of their absent husbands.
 Some time after, these slaves hearing that
 their masters were about to return, fortified
 and intrenched themselves, in order to hinder
 them from entering into their own country,
 and claiming their wives and possessions.
 The Scythians advancing, several skirmishes
 were fought between them, with doubtful
 success, when one of their leaders advised
 his countrymen not to fight again with their
 slaves as with equals; nor to attack them
 with warlike weapons, which were signs of
 freedom,

CHAP.
X.



freedom, but with such whips and scourges as they had formerly been accustomed to make them feel. This advice being put in execution, the whips recalled their ideas of slavery, and all the pusillanimity naturally attending it; they threw down their arms, they fled in confusion, many of them were taken and put to death, and not a few of the unfaithful wives destroyed themselves, to avoid the resentment of their injured husbands. Though this story has been by different authors varied in several of its circumstances, yet as so many have agreed in relating it, we have not the least doubt of its authenticity, especially as we are assured that the Novogorodians, whose city stands in Sarmatian Scythia, had formerly a coin stamped in memory of it, with a man on horseback shaking a whip in his hand; and it is supposed that the ancient custom in Russia, of the bride presenting the bridegroom on the nuptial night with a whip, originated from this story of the Scythian wives.

Persian.
women, •
their cha-
racter.

FROM what we have already related concerning the ancient Persians, it appears that their women were not the most rigidly virtuous; but the voluptuous and libidinous character

character of that people cannot be better delineated, nor painted in stronger colours, than we find it in the book of Esther, where we have a relation of Ahasuerus, one of their monarchs, carrying his refinements in debauchery to such a length, as has never yet been paralleled in the history of mankind.

CHAP.
X



‘ Now when every maiden’s turn was
 ‘ come to go in unto the king Ahasuerus,
 ‘ after that she had been twelve months,
 ‘ according to the manner of the women, for
 ‘ so were the days of their purification accomplished; viz. six months with oil of
 ‘ myrrh, and six months with sweet odours,
 ‘ and with other things for the purifying of
 ‘ the women.

‘ THEN thus came every maiden unto the
 ‘ king; whatsoever she desired was given her
 ‘ to go with her out of the house of the
 ‘ women into the king’s house.

‘ In the evening she went out, and on the
 ‘ morrow she returned, into the second house
 ‘ of the women, to the custody of Shaafgaz,
 ‘ the king’s chamberlain, which kept the

CHAP. ^{X.} ' concubines; she came in unto the king no
 ~~~~~ ' more, except the king delighted in her, and  
 ' that she were called by name.'

SUCH was the expence, and such the refinement necessary to fit a woman for the arms of the Persian monarch; and such was the perpetual imprisonment and continence to which he condemned the hapless wretches, who, with all this parade of voluptuousness, were destined for one night only to the hateful pre-eminence of his bed; in short, it was in the court of Persia, where we may properly say, that lawless love reigned triumphant, where mothers mixed in incestuous commerce with their sons, daughters with their fathers, and sisters with their brothers. Artaxerxes Memmon, having fallen in love with his own daughter Atossa, hesitated to marry her on account of some scruples of conscience, but his passion was fomented, and these scruples dissipated by his mother: "Are not you," said she, "set by the gods  
 "over the Persians, as the only rule of what  
 "is becoming or unbecoming, virtuous or  
 "vicious?" A speech, which strongly indicates that daring spirit of woman, which when urged by any of the more violent  
 passions,

passions, has often overleaped these barriers, and born down those difficulties, from which male nature has shrunk aghast and terrified. Cambyfes, another of the Persian kings, entertaining some doubts whether he might marry his own sister, convened the magi to give him their opinion, “We can find no law,” said they, “in Persia, to authorize a man to marry his own sister, but our laws authorize a king to do whatever he pleases.”

As the inferior ranks of mankind always imitate the follies and fashions of the superior, it is natural to suppose that in ancient Persia, the expence of the Haram as well as of the Seraglio, was exceedingly great; a circumstance which appears the more probable from a survey of this matter in modern Persia, where, so unrestrainable is the extravagance of wives, that though every man may legally have four, few are found hardy enough to venture upon more than one; as they must be liberally supplied with whatever the most voluptuous luxury can require to adorn their persons, to promote festivity, and display grandeur. Startled at this prospect of almost insupportable expence, and

Z z 2

afraid,

CHAP.  
X.



afraid of the ruin in which it may terminate, many of the Persians avoid matrimony altogether, and hire a concubine for a limited term, which concubine they are not obliged to indulge in all the grandeur of a wife, nor to retain after the term agreed on is expired, unless agreeable to their inclinations. This picture, we are afraid, is not drawn from Persia only; do not the luxury and extravagance of the women every where make matrimony less fashionable? We recommend it therefore to them to consider this matter seriously in time, lest the legislature, to prevent depopulation, be at last obliged to restrain them by sumptuary laws,

Instance  
of the  
effect of  
jealousy.

IN countries where there is, as in Persia, an unlimited liberty of polygamy and concubinage, should we suppose that jealousy in the fair sex, is a passion much weakened by the variety of objects that divide it, and the restraint laid on it by the despotism of the men, we would be greatly mistaken; for in no country has it ever urged the soul to deeds of more merciless revenge. Xemes, among many other amours, had conceived a passion for the wife of his brother Masistus, which he prosecuted for a long time by promises

promises and threatenings, without success; CHAP.  
X  
tired with so many fruitless efforts, he at  
last changed his attack from the mother to  
her daughter, who, with much less opposi-  
tion, yielded herself to his wishes. Amestris,  
his queen, having discovered the amour, and  
imagined that the daughter only acted by  
the direction of her mother, from that mo-  
ment resolved on the severest revenge. By  
an ancient custom in Persia, the queen had  
a right, on the king's birth-day, to demand  
of him any favour that she thought proper.  
Amestris asked that the wife of Masistus  
should be delivered into her hands; she had  
no sooner received her than she ordered  
her breasts, nose, tongue, and lips to be  
cut off, and thrown to the dogs, and that  
she should be detained to see her own flesh  
devoured by them. This cruel and revenge-  
ful disposition, the women of modern Persia  
seem to inherit from their ancestors; finding  
themselves only courted as the sources of  
animal pleasure, and in every other light  
despised, the discovery contributes to render  
them objects truly worthy of contempt. By  
confinement obliged to be indolent, their  
minds prey upon their constitutions; chag-  
rined with the coldness of a husband who is  
cloyed

CHAP.  
X.

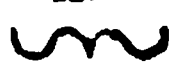


cloyed with variety, and jealous to madness of the rivals who attract more of his attention, they are continually brooding over stratagems to free themselves from both; poison is the means they commonly make use of, and they are furnished with a variety of sorts of it, by the Jew women who are allowed to come to their apartments to sell toys. With the same infamous hags they also traffick for philtres and love potions, to procure them the greatest share of the affection of their husbands.

Depravity  
of  
manners,  
almost  
universal.

MODESTY and chastity were virtues hardly known to many of the ancients. The Aushi, a people of Lybia, cohabited so promiscuously with their women, that the whole of the children were considered as belonging to the community. The wives of the Bactrians were, through a long series of years, famed for licentiousness; and custom had given such a sanction to their crimes, that the husbands had not only lost all power of restraining them, but even durst hardly venture to complain of their infidelity. In Cyprus, an island sacred to Venus, the very rites of their religion were all mingled with debauchery and prostitution.

And

And the Lydians, and many other nations, C H A P.  
X.  
publicly prostituted their daughters, and   
other female relations for hire. But to multiply instances of the depravity of ancient manners would be endless; mankind, even when bridled by the strongest penal laws, and restricted in their passions by the sacred voice of religion, are but too often, in the pursuit of unlawful pleasures, apt to disregard both; what then must they have been before society, before laws existed, and when religion lent its sanction to encourage the vices and deprave the heart?

C H A P.

## C H A P. XI.


*The same Subject continued.*CHAP.  
XI.

AS the history of the nations we have hitherto been considering is so enveloped in these clouds of darkness which obscure antiquity, we shall leave it, to make some observations on the character and conduct of women, in periods with which we are better acquainted.

General  
idea of  
the  
Greeks.

IN prosecuting this plan we naturally come to the Greeks, a people so distinguished and admired; who, for many ages, shone so illustrious in arts and arms, and whose panegyric, has been sounded so loud in ancient and modern history; that we are sorry a regard for truth will not suffer us to eccho to the trumpet of fame, in the character she has given them. For when we have said that they shone in arts and arms, we have completed their eulogium. When we consider them as patriots, they appear distinguishable. When we consider them as men, and as citizens of the world, they,



they greatly disgust us. Other nations CHAP.  
XI.  
made laws to improve nature, and to   
excite humanity. Those of some of the  
Grecian states were calculated to eradicate  
both. In short, in whatever view we con-  
template this people, we find them remark-  
able only for an unnatural austerity of  
manners, for the most inflexible severity,  
and a life hardly softened by one agreeable  
shade in the whole picture.


THE character we have hitherto drawn  
of the fair sex, is calculated to excite but  
few of these pleasing emotions; we would  
wish to warm our bosoms whenever we con-  
template objects so dear to us. But we  
write the History of Women, not their pane-  
gyric. Truth, therefore, still obliges us to  
exhibit to view characters hardly more ami-  
able or engaging than those we have already  
drawn.

IN a preceding chapter we have observed  
that, during the whole of what are called  
the heroic ages, the history of Greece is  
nothing but a compound of the most absurd  
fable; from that fable it however appears,  
that their gods and men employed much of  
VOL. I.                      A a a                      their

CHAP.  
XI.

their time and ingenuity in seducing, stealing, and forcibly debauching their young women, circumstances which naturally suggest an idea that those women who could not be obtained by any other means must have been virtuous. But this favourable idea, is unhappily overturned by almost all the other circumstances of their history, for we hardly meet with any thing in their early periods but murders, rapes, and usurpations; witness the transactions of the kingdom of Mycene; of Pelops, and his descendants. The rapes of Io, Proserpine, Helena, &c. which stain the character of their gods and men with the foulest infamy; and as it has never happened in any nation that one sex has been exceedingly vicious, and the other not participated of its crimes, we may suppose that the Greek women were, in the heroic ages, far from being famous for any of the moral virtues; but the proof does not rest on this supposition, for the greatest part of the princes who assembled at the siege of Troy, were, after they returned, flagitiously murdered by their wives. A thing nearly incredible, when we consider that in those times custom had condemned the wife who had lost a husband to perpetual widowhood.

BUT

CHAP.  
XI.

 Laws in  
Greece fa-  
vourable  
to debau-  
chery of  
mannes .

BUT to proceed to times of which we are better informed. The women of other nations were indecent through the strength of their ungovernable passions; some of the Greek women were obliged to be indecent by law. In Sparta, what virtue, what decorum could be expected, when even the strongest temptations to vice had the public sanction of the legislator? In the heroic ages, while ignorance and brutality of manners prevailed, we are not much surpris'd to find the women conducting the men to the baths, undressing them, and attending to dress and rub them when they came out; but in Sparta, famed for its salutary laws, and when Greece was in its most polished condition, we are amazed to find that both sexes resorted to, and bathed together in the public baths. And this amazement is still heightened, when we are assured that here also, plays were acted by order of the legislator, where young people of both sexes were obliged to fight, and dance naked on the stage, that the men, according to his ideas, might be thereby excited to matrimony. What were the consequences of these indecencies? It is agreed on by all the ancients, that both sexes went to those plays

CHAP.  
XL.

only for the sake of debauchery; that, disgusted by this shameless exposure, the men paid less regard to the women, that the women became less virtuous, and at last grew dissolute to such a degree as to be thereby distinguished from all the other women of Greece. Euripedes, and some others of the Greek authors, bestow upon them epithets which decency will not allow us to translate, nor were these epithets the overflowings of the gall of satiric poets and violent declaimers only, they were the cool and considerate reflections of impartial historians. But we would not be understood as altogether confining dissoluteness and debauchery to the women of Sparta, those of many of the other states were little inferior to them. In Thracia and Bœotia they every third year held a festival in memory of the expedition of Bacchus into India, at which both married women and virgins, with javelins in their hands and dishevelled hair, ran about like furies bellowing the praises of the god, and committing every disorder which folly could suggest, or madness execute.

WHEREVER

WHEREVER public prostitution becomes so fashionable that it is attended with no disgrace in the opinion of the male, and with exceedingly little in that of the female sex, there, we may assure ourselves, the morals of the women are highly contaminated; a circumstance of which Athens afforded the most glaring proof. In that city, courtezans were not only kept in a public manner by most of the young men of fashion, but greatly countenanced, and even publicly visited by Solon their lawgiver, who applauded such young men as were found in the stews, because their going to these places rendered them less apt to attempt the virtue of modest women. But Athenian courtezans were not only visited by their great lawgiver, but also by the celebrated Socrates, and most of their other philosophers, who, not content with going frequently to see them themselves, even sometimes carried their wives and daughters along with them; a circumstance which we do not recollect to have met with in any other country, and which could not but tend to give these wives a mean opinion of virtue, when they saw the preference that was given to vice. And when such of their own sex as thus publicly deviated

CHAP.  
XI.Deference  
shewn to  
courte-  
zans.

CH. P. XI. deviated from the paths of chastity were so openly esteemed and regarded, it was natural for those of a different character to pay the less regard to that chastity, the practising of which gained them no superior privilege nor advantage.

Causes of  
this de-  
ference.

THE whole history of ancient Greece presents us with courtezans enjoying uncommon reputation and honour; to account for this, we must lay it down as a fundamental principle, that our sex has a natural inclination to the company and conversation of the other. But in Greece, modest women were all so strictly confined, that none besides their nearest relations were allowed to see or converse with them; and from this confinement it naturally followed, that they were uncultivated, ignorant of learning, and almost of every thing that was transacting in the world; they were, therefore, ill qualified to entertain or amuse the men with their conversation. The Grecians had a natural taste for the beautiful, a taste which was greatly improved by their statuaries and painters; but the beauties of their modest women were rendered invisible by veils, and unengaging by awkwardness. The very  
reverse



reverse was the case with the courtezans, they improved their charms by every art, shewed them unveiled in every public place, and all had access to their company and to their houses. Not ignorant of the disadvantages that other women laboured under, they availed themselves of, and improved, their own advantages; they dedicated a great part of their time to the arts and sciences, to the knowledge of public affairs, to speaking with elegance and propriety, and, above all, to the arts of pleasing, which, whenever properly managed by women of beauty, have an ascendancy over us that they themselves seem but half acquainted with. Hence it is not difficult to see how the Grecian prostitutes crept into such consequence; they had art and nature on their side, and modest women being all imprisoned, they had no rivals to contend with.

THE present inhabitants of Greece seem to have pretty nearly copied the pattern of antiquity; private amours, and even public prostitution, are considered by them but as trifling peccadillos, which any woman may be guilty of without losing her character. A Greek girl will agree with a Frank for any

Present  
inhabi-  
tants of  
Greece  
like their  
ancestors.

CHAP.  
XI.

any limited time he pleases: the Subasçi will as easily grant them a licence to live together for that time; and should any one be caught with her, during the continuance of it, she and her gallant would both be fined, and exhibited through the nearest city, mounted together on an ass. At Venice, the courtezans of the present time seem nearly on a footing with those of ancient Greece. By the strongest sumptuary laws, the Venetian nobility are restrained from spending their money almost on any thing but their mistresses; and while the modest women feel their inclinations curbed by these laws, in every article of luxury and expence, the courtezans, either above or below their notice, evade them altogether.

Grecian  
women  
destitute  
of the  
tender-  
ness of  
their sex.

As the bodies of women are of a softer and more delicate nature than those of the men, so their minds are generally more finely attuned to the gentler feelings of tenderness and humanity; but the Grecian women, either by nature, or more probably by custom, were in this respect miserably deficient. At an annual festival, celebrated in honour of Diana, all the children of Sparta were whipt till the blood ran down  
on



on the altar of the goddesses. Under this CHAP.  
cruel ceremony, which was inflicted, as they XI.  
pretended, to accustom them to bear pain without murmuring, some, almost every year, expired. The inhuman barbarity was performed in the presence of the whole city; the fathers, and what our female readers will hardly credit, *even the mothers*, beholding their children bathed in blood, and ready to expire with pain, stood exhorting them to suffer the number of lashes assigned them, without a groan or a complaint. It may be alleged here, that women being spectators and encouragers of a cruel ceremony, is no proof of their want of proper feelings, but only an instance of the power of custom. A doctrine to which we cannot altogether assent, being persuaded, that there are many of the fair-sex, whose constitutions are so humane and tender, that even custom could not reconcile them to barbarity; but allowing it to have that power, what folly were the men guilty of in instituting such a ceremony? they were robbing the women of every thing valuable in their composition, and labouring to make them what they were not intended to be by nature.

CHAP.  
XI

~ BUT this inhuman custom was not the only proof that the Greek women were divested of that female tenderness which we so much admire in the sex. There was at Sparta, a custom, if possible, still more barbarous; as soon as a male child was born, he was visited by a deputation of the elders of each tribe; if he appeared to be of a weakly constitution, and not likely to become a stout and healthful member of their state, they judged him not to be worth the trouble of rearing; and therefore ordered him to be thrown into a quagmire, at the bottom of the Mountain Taygeta. This was valuing human beings exactly as we do an ox or an ass; and entirely setting aside all the moral turpitude of murder. It was only, however, practised at Sparta; and we should have hoped, that, even there, it was contrary to the inclination, and without the consent, of the women; were we not assured by a variety of authors, that the Spartan dames, in every circumstance, almost entirely governed their husbands. To the barbarous customs now mentioned, we shall only add one more. To so weak and expiring a state was the paternal instinct of nature reduced among the Greeks, that they frequently, as we have  
already

already related, exposed such children as C H A P.  
XI. they were not able, or did not chuse, to maintain\*. A barbarity which, more or less, prevailed in all the Grecian states; except at Thebes, a city, where, to the immortal honour of the inhabitants, it was so much abhorred, that, by their laws, it was capitally punished.

WE shall finish this subject by observing, that the Spartan matrons received the news of their sons having been slain in battle, not only without any signs of grief, but even with an appearance of extravagant joy and satisfaction, which they took the most early opportunity of shewing in public. Those same women, however, who pretended to have imbibed so much heroism, that they were strangers to every fear, but such as arose on account of their country, when they

\* This was not a custom of the Greeks only, it prevailed among many of their contemporary nations. The Romans, even after they were reckoned the most polished people on the globe, when oppressed with ills of a real or imaginary nature, deemed it an act of paternal tenderness to release their children from the pains and miseries of life. Constantine to put a stop to this growing evil, issued an edict to all the cities of Italy and Africa, ordering relief to all who should produce before the magistrates, such children as their poverty would not allow them to maintain.

CHAP.  
XI.

~~~~ saw Epaminondas, after the battle of Leuctra, marching his victorious army towards Sparta, testified by their behaviour, that they were subject to fears of another nature; and that all their joys and sorrows arose not solely from the prosperity or adversity of their country. They ran up and down in the streets in terror and despair, filling the air with shrieks; and transfusing their own timidity into the men, caused more disorder than the approach of the victorious army.

Other
vices of
the Greek
women.

WHEN we come to the history of the matrimonial compact, we shall see how the Grecian women behaved to their husbands; and shall at present sum up the rest of their character, by observing, that at Athens, even drunkenness appears to have been among the number of their vices; as it is evident by a law of Solon, in which it is enacted, that no woman shall be attended by more than one servant when she goes abroad, *unless when she is drunk*. It would seem that the Athenian women also made use of the darkness of the night to screen them in their intrigues; for another law of Solon ordains, that no woman shall walk abroad at night, *unless she intends to play the whore*.

From

From several other ordinances of this legislator, it plainly appears, that to keep the sex within the bounds of that decorum prescribed to them, was a matter of no small difficulty; for, to the laws we have just now mentioned, he was obliged to add others, which shew that they were only to be governed by coercive measures. He ordained, that no woman should go out of the city with more provisions than could be purchased for an obolus, nor with a basket higher than a cubit; and if a woman went abroad at night, she was to be carried in a waggon, preceded by a flambeau: from all which it seems evident, that the design of Solon was to make the Athenian women decent and virtuous. If Lycurgus had the same intention in the laws that he gave the Lacedemonians, we cannot help thinking that he had but ill studied human nature; for, though the inhabitants of countries where no clothes are used, are not on that account less virtuous than their neighbours, where they are used, yet there may be modes of clothing which more powerfully excite the passions, than the most absolute nakedness. Of this kind, in our opinion, was the dress of Sparta. We shall have occasion after-

CHAP.
XI.

CHAP. XI. afterward to take notice of it, at present
 shall only observe, that it has been exclaimed
 against by a variety of the writers of antiquity.

THOUGH such is the general character of the Greeks, happily there is no instance of a corruption of manners having spread itself over any nation, in such a manner as to leave nobody free from the contagion. In the midst of licentiousness and barbarity, at least in these periods, that were subsequent to the siege of Troy, the Grecian women afford us several instances of chastity, conjugal fidelity, and maternal affection,

Of the
 Roman
 women.

IN the earlier periods of the Roman republic, before the wealth poured in from innumerable conquests had introduced luxury and dissipation, no women were more famous for their virtues, none more infamous afterward for their vices. The whole history of Rome, for several ages after its foundation, bears testimony to the tenderness, frugality, and chastity of her women. Of this nothing can be a stronger proof, than the long period that intervened between the foundation of the republic and the first divorce;

divorce; a period of five hundred and twenty years, which, all circumstances considered, was indeed a long one, for the men had a power of divorcing their wives almost at pleasure. To this proof we could add a great variety of others, but shall only mention the story of the rape of Lucretia, which in the strongest manner demonstrates the value which the Roman women set upon the most unspotted chastity. Lucretia, being violated in secret, could not have found the smallest difficulty in concealing what had happened; and besides, should it have been discovered, the fraud and force made use of against her, were sufficient to have quieted her conscience, and exculpated her to her husband and the public from every imputation of criminality. Yet, so exalted were her ideas of chastity, that she was resolved not to give back to the arms of her husband, a body even involuntarily polluted, nor to survive the violation she had suffered; but calling together her friends, in the presence of her husband, she revealed to them the secret of the rape that had been committed upon her; and while conjuring them to revenge her injured honour, she
stabbed

CHAP. stabbed herself in the breast with a dagger
XI. she had concealed under her garments for
~~~~~ that purpose.

THE care taken by women to preserve their chastity, will always be in proportion to the value set upon it by the men. When the women find that the men pay but little regard to this virtue, that they are as much caressed, and have as good a chance for a husband after they have trespassed the rules of it as before; the strongest obligation laid upon them to preserve it, is then taken off. A proof of this occurs in the infancy of the Roman republic, the men had the highest regard for chastity; they not only avoided saying any thing inconsistent with purity of manners, any thing that could give offence to modesty, in their serious hours; but even in their gay and sportive humours, when the watch is apt to slip aside from the door of the lips, never transgressed the bounds of decency, nor indulged in frolic and dalliance, even with their own wives, before a third person: they slighted and despised the woman who had voluntarily yielded herself to an unlawful embrace; nor did any thing hurt



hurt their honour so much, as to have a wife or a daughter violated; hence the women sedulously endeavoured to preserve their virtue, because the men abandoned and neglected her who had lost it.

HUSBANDS and fathers, valuing chastity more than life, sometimes killed their wives and daughters, when they had no other means of preventing them from being ravished; and women themselves, fired by this example, not unfrequently sacrificed their lives to preserve their honour. Virgineus, when he had tried every method to save his hapless daughter Virginea from the tyrant Claudius, who had claimed her as his slave; that he might have an opportunity of debauching her; having obtained leave to speak to her before she was delivered to the tyrant by the judgment of the court, took her in his arms, and wiping the tears from her eyes, drew near to some butchers shops, which stood in the Forum, where causes were publicly tried; and where Virginea had just been adjudged the property of Claudius. There, snatching up a knife, and turning to his daughter, “ My dear child, (said he) this “ is the only way left to save thy liberty and

CHAP. "thy honour. Go, Virginea! go to thy  
 XI.  
 ~~~~~ "ancestors whilst thou art yet free and un-  
 "defiled!" Thus saying, he plunged the
 fatal knife into her breast; and such was the
 regard of the Romans to chastity, that al-
 most the whole of the people rose in arms,
 to revenge the injured father, and the mur-
 dered daughter.

COULD any thing more forcibly demon-
 strate the manner in which the Romans ex-
 erted themselves to preserve the delicacy, as
 well as the honour of their women, it would
 be the following circumstances, Manlius, a
 patrician and senator of Rome, having in-
 advertently saluted his wife in the presence
 of his daughter, and being by the Censors
 accused of an indecency; the Senate, after
 solemnly considering the matter, struck him
 off the list of their order. Julius Cæsar,
 having heard some indecent reports of his
 wife, immediately divorced her, without en-
 quiring whether she was guilty or innocent;
 and being asked the reason of so severe a
 treatment, "I would not (answered he) have
 "the wife of Cæsar even suspected." When
 several of the Vestal virgins had been at one
 time corrupted, the Romans reared a temple
 to


to Venus *Verticordia*, or the turner of CHAP. XI.
 hearts; and worshipped her with such cere-
 monies, as they imagined would incline her
 to turn the hearts of the Roman women to
 that chastity which they were in danger of
 utterly forsaking. When such were the pri-
 vate, such the public instances of the regard
 shewn to chastity by the men; when the
 women forfeited every thing that was dear
 and interesting to their sex; if they deviated
 from it, can we wonder, that the Roman
 ladies, were remarkable beyond any thing
 that history has handed down to us, for this
 most exalted of female virtues?

SUCH was the state of chastity in Rome,
 till the Romans extended their conquests
 into Asia; and brought from thence the
 amazing wealth, as well as voluptuous
 manners, of the nations they had plun-
 dered. Corrupted by these, all the boasted
 patriotism of the one sex began to give way
 to the most shameful venality, and all the
 chastity of the other, to the force of fashion.
 This venality of the men was whetted by
 the now luxurious manner of living, and
 gratified by getting into offices of state, and
 plundering the provinces, or selling the
 C c c 2 interests

Change
 in the
 manners
 of the
 Roman
 women.

CHAP.
XI.

interests of their country. That of the women was whetted by the splendid appearance of the wives of such as had conquered or governed provinces; but as the sex had nothing beside their charms to dispose of, they set them up to the highest bidder, and with the money, rioted in voluptuous indulgence and expensive show. Every sober plan of œconomy was overturned, spectacles and shows engrossed the attention of both sexes; women contended with each other, who should bribe highest to obtain the favours of a player. Debauchery reduced fertility; but in order to reduce it still more, they learned to procure abortions, that their pleasures might suffer the less interruption. At last, jaded even with these pleasures, which they had tried the most unnatural means to vary, their lewdness became too powerful to be restrained by law, and bore down every obstacle that opposed it. The men, tinged with the licentious manners of the Asiatics, now paid nearly the same respect to her who had forfeited her title to chastity, as to her who had not. Hence lewdness and debauchery, neither afraid of shame nor of punishment became fashionable among every rank and condition

tion of women, while chastity was con- CHAP.
XI
sidered only as an antiquated and useless 
virtue.

COURTS are but too frequently the seminaries of vice. The Roman court was now remarkably so. The Empresses generally took the lead in lawless indulgence: the example of the great is commonly followed by the little: from the court, a scene of the most shameless libertinism, hardly to be paralleled in history, disseminated itself all over Rome. Women danced naked on the stage, bathed promiscuously with the men, and, with more than masculine effrontery, committed every sort of irregularity. By the unbounded licence thus given to lawless pleasures, matrimony became unfashionable, and was considered as a confinement and a burden, not consistent with Roman freedom and independence. To these ideas also the conduct of the married women did not a little contribute; for besides their luxurious expence, besides the open licentiousness of their manners, they became at last so daringly flagitious, that they entered into a general conspiracy to poison their husbands. They were detected, and some of them
suffered

CHAP.
XI.

suffered the punishment due to their crimes, but the remainder were not amended, and the disgust which the men had conceived against matrimony, was augmented by the remembrance of an intention so unparalleled and execrable.

Laws of
the Ro-
mans to
restrain
this licen-
tiousness.

A VARIETY of laws were from time to time devised by the Romans to stop the progress of public prostitution. Among others it was ordained, that all courtezans should take out a licence from the court of the *Ædiles*; that they should renew it once every year, and not be allowed to carry on their trade without it; that their names, and the price of their favours, should be written upon the doors of their houses, and that they should not be allowed to go out before the evening. These, one would have imagined, were such conditions as no woman who had the least remaining spark of delicacy would have agreed to. But the torrent of vice was not to be stopped so easily. Women, who were wives and daughters to Roman knights, were not ashamed to apply for such licences; and the infection was even reaching higher. *Vistilla*, a lady of a *Prætorian* family, with an unparalleled effrontery appeared

appeared in public court before the *Ædiles*, and declaring herself a prostitute, demanded a licence to enable her to exercise her trade. Debauched as the Romans then were, under a prince so dissolute as Tiberius, their fears were alarmed; and the senate enacted several laws to restrain at least women of rank from degrading themselves and families by a conduct so infamous. They ordained, that no woman whose father, grandfather, or husband, was a Roman knight, or of any higher quality, should be allowed to take upon her the trade of prostitution. But when corruption had interwoven itself so dexterously into the manners and customs of the Romans, laws became too feeble to bring on a reformation. The emperor Titus prohibited all public stews. The prohibition was but little regarded. When Severus mounted the throne, he found on the roll of causes to be tried, no less than three thousand prosecutions for adultery. He had formed a scheme of reformation; from that moment he abandoned it as impossible.

BUT it was not the manners and customs of the Romans only, that were tinged with debauchery:

CHAP.
XI.

Religion
of the
Romans
in some
cases a
scene of
profligacy.

debauchery: that vice at last insinuated itself into their religious ceremonies also. Heliogabalus, in a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine mount, sacrificed with every circumstance of cost and solemnity to the god whose high priest he had been. The most extraordinary victims, the most precious aromatics, and the richest wines were profusely consumed on his altar, while around it, a chorus of Syrian damsels performed lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music. Nor were these ceremonies of Heliogabalus the only ones by which this people were contaminated. The Bacchanalian mysteries of the Greeks were likewise introduced into their city, and filled it with a scene of horror and profligacy scarcely to be equalled in the annals of any country. These mysteries were at first only revealed to the women, but soon after, the men were admitted to them also; from that moment their meetings became infamous for the commission of every folly, and of every crime. They drunk, they debauched, they hired false witnesses, forged false deeds, and appended false seals to them. They administered poisons, hired assassins, stole their fellow citizens, and murdered them so privately,

vately, that even their bodies could not be found for burial. Their meetings being always in the night, they frequently sallied out from them with dishevelled hair, and frantic howlings, the darkness encreased the horror of the scene, and they filled imperial Rome with consternation and with blood.

CHAP.
XL.


To all these instances of the flagitious character of the Roman women, we may add, that they appear to have been the first who practised the trade of prostitution in their own country. It seems to have been a custom from the earliest antiquity, that the prostitutes of every nation, were women who came from other nations, and were called *strangers*; hence a strange woman, and an harlot, generally signify the same thing in scripture; and hence the repeated injunctions which Solomon laid upon his son, not to give his strength to strange women. This custom of women betaking themselves to another country when they became prostitutes, we have reason to believe, was universal among the ancients; whether it was, that every people, willing to have it believed that their own women were more virtuous

Courtezans were generally strangers.

CHAP. XI. than those of their neighbours, would not suffer them to prostitute themselves at home; or whether such women as took upon them this shameful trade, were instigated by some little remains of modesty, to leave their own country and practise it among strangers; we shall not take upon us to determine: but we are assured, that the Greeks, however debauched and licentious, commonly adhered to this custom, while the Romans, who broke through every restraint, paid no regard to it.

Cruelty of
the Ro-
man wo-
men.

BUT lewdness and debauchery were not the only vices of the Roman women; through the whole of their existence as a nation, the Romans were remarkable for their cruelty. Nor was this only a male vice, the softer sex were far from being proof against the contagion. In the two hundred and twentieth year of Rome, Tullia, the daughter of Severus, then king of the Romans, having, with her husband Tarquin, conspired to assassinate her father, and place themselves on his throne; the order for the atrocious deed being given in a tumult of the people, the infamous Tullia, mounted her chariot with an
air

air of triumph to return to her house. In the street through which she was drove, the murderers had just left the king's body bleeding and hardly breathless; the dismal spectacle struck the charioteer with horror, he checked his horses, and petrified with amazement, could not proceed! Why do not you go on; cries Tullia, what stops you? Alas! said he, turning about to her as he spoke, That is the body of the king, your father! At these words, snatching up a stool that was in the chariot, and throwing it at his head, Go on, cried she, and do not be afraid of driving over a dead body. The driver obeyed, and the blood of the father is said to have stained the chariot and the cloaths of the inhuman daughter. Antony having ordered Cicero to be beheaded, and the head to be brought to him, when it arrived, his wife, Fulvia, laid hold of it, struck it on the face, uttered many bitter execrations against it, and placing it between her knees, drew out the tongue, and pierced it with a bodkin. To these we might easily add many more instances of the cruelty of the Roman women, but we drop a subject so disagreeable.

CHAP.
XI.

CHAP.
XI.

AFTER the Romans became acquainted with Asia, in whatever light we view their women, they scarcely exhibit any amiable qualities, except some imperfect relics of their ancient patriotism, a virtue, which unless exercised with the greatest moderation, scarcely ever adorns the female character. As wives, we have seen that the Roman matrons were frequently unchaste. As mothers, not less frequently careless and unnatural. As citizens, endeavouring to overturn all decency and decorum, and sacrificing every thing at the shrine of pleasure and ambition. Even religion, which almost in every age and country, seems to have been more devoutly cultivated by the women than the men, does not appear at Rome to have had any superior power over the female heart. Their women attended at processions, when any public calamity was to be averted, and were sometimes made priestesses of certain temples; but we read of few peculiar acts of their piety, and of few sacrifices which they offered to propitiate the gods of their country.

SUCH is the general character of the Roman women; were we to descend to
parti-

particulars, we might give instances almost without end of their depravity, and not a few of their virtue. Before the Republic was contaminated with the riches, which from every quarter of the plundered globe flowed to Rome, they were the best of wives, of mothers, and of citizens; having by their mediation, advice, and money, several times saved the sinking state; and it is with pleasure we remark, that even amidst the general depravity we have been delineating, there still appeared many amiable and virtuous characters, who bravely stemmed the tide of popular corruption, and in ages overrun with every vice, stood forth the advocates of virtue, were patterns of maternal tenderness, and of conjugal fidelity; preserved their children and husbands from falling victims to the horrid proscriptions of Octavius, Antony, Lepidus, Nero, and many others, who, with a barbarity which can hardly be equalled in history, caused to be murdered in cool blood one half of the nobility of Rome.

CHAP.
XI.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

*The same Subject continued.*C H A P.
XII.

LEAVING the Romans, and proceeding on our enquiry, we again descend into the regions of historical obscurity, where we are presented with a group of nations and people, now hardly distinguishable from each other, and of whom we scarcely know any thing but the names. Of such people it would be vain, as well as ridiculous, to attempt a minute and circumstantial character; it would be sitting down to paint, without materials, or, to paint intirely at random.

Virtues
of the an-
cient
northern
women.

THOUGH in a state of the utmost uncultivation of manners, though attached to religions which inculcated but few of the precepts of morality, and in many cases directly contradicted them; the women of the ancient northern nations were not destitute of virtue and of excellence. Early in life, they learned that modesty which adorned their character; and that industry which



which often maintained themselves and their husbands, when these failed to procure subsistence by their hunting, or depredations. Educated by careful mothers, and fortified in female virtue by every example around them ; chastity became almost an innate principle in their minds, and daily acquired strength by the contempt with which the men treated those who disregarded it ; a contempt so great, that no woman could violate her chastity, without precipitating herself into a certainty of perpetual celibacy, as none could in this case entertain even a distant hope of pardon, or of a husband, who was not, as in modern times, to be obtained by riches, nor the alliance of the great, but only by personal attractions, most strictly attached to unspotted personal virtue.

TACITUS draws a beautiful picture of ancient German simplicity and chastity, in the following words : “ A strict regard for
 “ the matrimonial state characterises the
 “ Germans, and deserves our highest ap-
 “ plause. Among them female virtue runs
 “ no hazard of being debauched by the out-
 “ ward objects of the senses, or of being
 “ corrupted by such social gaieties as inflame
 “ the

CHAP.
XII

“ the passions; chastity once forfeited is
 “ never forgiven; vice is not made the ob-
 “ ject of mirth and raillery, nor is fashion
 “ pleaded as an excuse for being corrupt,
 “ or for corrupting others; good customs
 “ and manners avail more among those bar-
 “ barous people, than good laws among
 “ such as are more refined.” We are apt to
 place the greatest purity of manners, in par-
 ticular states of cultivation and refinement;
 experience, however, shews us that we are
 often mistaken. From this account of Ta-
 citus, the ancient Germans appear to have
 exceeded in some points of morality, the
 most polished and instructed nations of Eu-
 rope; nor were the Goths behind them,
 they deemed purity of manners their distin-
 guishing characteristic, and therefore they
 said, “ Though we punish fornication in
 “ our own countrymen, we pardon it in the
 “ Romans, as they are by nature and edu-
 “ cation weak, and incapable of reaching
 “ to our sublimity of virtue.”

Laws
protecting
chastity.

By an ancient law of Iceland, he who
 kissed a woman against her inclination, was
 condemned to exile; and even he who did
 it with her consent, subjected himself thereby
 to



to a fine of three marks of silver. We have in a former chapter taken notice of some laws of this nature among other northern nations, and shall here add, that they were in general so solicitous of the honour of their women, and took such care that no indecency should be offered to them, that their laws in most places prescribed the manner in which the two sexes should behave to each other. The Goths prohibited even a surgeon from bleeding a free woman, unless in the presence of her father, mother, brother, son, or some other near relation; and fined him who presumed to touch a woman against her will, according to her quality, and the part of her body he touched. In other places, a fine was also imposed on him who kissed a woman, *except in sporting, at convivial meetings, or on returning from a long journey.* These, and many other laws of the same nature, stood as so many centinels on the threshold of virtue, and by rendering all access to the fair sex so exceedingly difficult and dangerous, taught men to look up to them as a kind of superior beings, and stamped upon them a dignity which bordered upon adoration; a dignity which they never can attain to, where modern freedom and gallan-

CHAP.
XII.

try make them so easy and familiar with the other sex; and, where their own vanity prompts them to appear constantly in every public place, and cheapen themselves by a visible fondness to be disposed of. There is not perhaps in nature a more general law, than that which induces us to value every thing in proportion to the pains and labour it has cost us, the women of the nations we are considering, naturally chaste, proud, and difficult of access, were not to be gained by every slight attack, nor did they yield to every pretended admirer. Nothing but a lover's rendering himself worthy of his mistress by valour, and every other fashionable acquisition, could make her propitious to his wishes; hence he seldom got possession of the object of his heart, but after a long train of labours and difficulties, and the value he had for her, was measured by the retrospective view of all that he had done and suffered on her account. But a further discussion of this subject will fall more naturally under the head of courtship.

AN historian endeavouring to delineate the characters of people so little known, as many of those we have already mentioned,
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as well as those we are now considering, may be compared to an antiquarian, solicitous about discovering the real size of our ancestors, in the times when they were said to be gigantic ; but not being able any where to find an entire statue, or skeleton, can only find the foot or hand of a statue, or the bone of an arm or leg of a skeleton ; when, calculating that such parts of a regularly formed body, bear such proportions to the whole, he can discover with a tolerable degree of precision, what the size of the whole was. In like manner, though the historian has only broken and interrupted sketches of the character of a people, he may, by carefully comparing them together, and tracing the relations they bear to the virtues and vices that make up the whole of a human character, be able to form a tolerable conjecture concerning the people to whom they belong. Thus from every anecdote handed down to us, of the women of the North, we may venture to assert that they were chaste, frugal, industrious, and possessed of some little share of knowledge, which gave them in many respects a superiority over the men, who were to the last degree ignorant. With all these good qualities, they seem to have

CHAP.
XII.

had a mixture of pride and ferocity in their nature, not very consistent with that female softness and delicacy which the men in general so much admire. Among the Cimbri, clothed in white tunics fastened with brass hooks, and girt with a girdle of the same metal, they officiated as priestesses in offering human sacrifices; and with a relentless steadiness plunged the sacrificing knife into the bowels of their prisoners, viewed with attentive unconcern their dying agonies, and predicted future events, from the manner in which the blood flowed from the wounds they had inflicted.

SUCH was nearly the general character of the fair sex from the earliest infancy of the northern nations, till towards the decline of chivalry, when it began to assume a more degenerate appearance. The women gradually began to lose their pride, and consequently their value; the passion for gallantry, which had been carried even to a romantic veneration, began to run in a channel less pure and exalted. Women were considered as mere mortal beings, and being so let down, they became subject to all the frailties and vices of mortality. The manners of the times



times had been too stately for humanity, a relaxation naturally took place, and they became too low and debauched for the pen of the historian; suffice it to say, that even laws were obliged to be enacted, restraining husbands from letting out their wives to public prostitution.

In the sixth century, when the passions seem to have been divided between religion and debauchery, and the churches equally appropriated to the prayers of the saint and the profligacy of the sinner, it was no uncommon thing to seize on a woman, carry her by force, or decoy her by fraud, to a church, and there detain and debauch her; nor could her relations, nor the laws, rescue her from the arms of her ravisher, while he chose to keep within the walls of the sacred asylum. In the reign of Charlemagne, it was a custom in France to collect together all the strumpets they could find, and make them run races for the entertainment of the public. Henry VII. of England, licensed houses of public prostitution, and signs on the walls shewed the nature of the entertainment within. In the time of Lewis XI. a favourite theatrical entertainment was the
Judg-

CHAP.
XII.



Judgment of Paris; when three of the most handsome of their female players, naked as they were born, represented the three goddesses, who submitted themselves in this condition to the judgment of that youth. Whether it was consistent with female modesty to be present at such entertainments, must be judged of from the complexion of the times: we will venture to affirm, however, that no circumstances could make it consistent with delicacy. We have had occasion formerly to mention, that the worship of polluted deities, and celebration of religious ceremonies remarkable for impurity, have greatly contributed to contaminate the manners; and we cannot help here observing, that though the object of christian adoration, and the rites of the christian religion, are the most pure and holy, the ministers of that religion were, in the times we are speaking of, quite the reverse. When almost every priest, who should have taught by example as well as by precept, gave himself up to lewdness, and publicly kept a variety of abandoned women about him; when he preached a religion which he disgraced, a virtue which his conduct overturned; when he inculcated a care of providing only for the
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the enjoyment of heaven, and minded nothing but the pleasures of earth, what could be expected from the people? Every rank felt the contagion; universal depravity and vulgarity of manners prevailed. The queen of Navarre published a volume of tales, almost too indelicate for the ear of a courtesan. Joan, queen of Portugal, licensed houses for public prostitution, and regulated every thing concerning them with a minuteness which modesty forbids us to describe. Queen Elizabeth of England, was not only addicted to swearing, but even to the most vulgar kind of oaths, which she uttered in a vulgar and indelicate manner. About her time, however, the manners of Europe were beginning to assume that chastity and elegance, for which we are now so happily distinguished. But before we survey the character and conduct of the present European women, it is necessary for us to take a view of the other parts of the globe, and proceed gradually from those states approaching the nearest to nature, to those where the human species has received the highest polish from art.

THE

CHAP.
XII.

THE nearer that men approach to a savage state, the less difference is always perceivable among them. In this state, their observations, their pursuits, are narrow and limited; their attachments few, but strong; and their resentments lasting and implacable. Beyond these, their ideas admit of little variation; consequently their character is marked with much stronger, though fewer and more uniform appearances than in polished nations, where it is formed and influenced by a thousand different circumstances and situations.

Character
of female
savages.

IN savage life, female delicacy has no existence: the most absolute nakedness raises not a blush; nor can any action excite the idea of shame: and as chastity itself has not the same value stamped upon it as in civil society, deviations from it are either considered as no fault, or at most as faults of a very trifling nature, which neither draw down on a delinquent the ridicule and contempt of her own sex, nor the neglect and desertion of ours. The instances we could give of this would be almost endless. Among the Natches, husbands voluntarily lend their wives to each other, and married
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as well as unmarried women, without the least ceremony, offer themselves to strangers; nay, in some places, they even complain to their countrymen, and desire them to revenge the indignity they have suffered, when their favours are rejected. In the district of the Hurons, she is not reckoned in the least degree criminal who offers herself to prostitution: it is a practice, into which girls are early initiated by their parents, and in which the custom of their country authorises them to continue through life. In many parts of South America, so little restraint is laid on the commerce of the sexes, that it plainly appears to be considered as an object not worthy of legislation. Don Ulloa reports, that the ancient Peruvians did not knowingly marry women who were virgins, and if on trial they found them such, were highly affronted at being imposed upon. It is said, that in the kingdom of Thibet, no woman who has not been deflowered is reckoned fit for matrimony.

THE Brazilian women are so far from paying any regard to chastity, that they even violate every principle of decency. At Mindanao, as soon as a stranger arrives, the

CHAP.
XII



natives flock about him, and eagerly invite him to their houses: the person whose invitation he accepts, is sure to offer him a female companion, whom he is obliged to accept, and to return a genteel present for the unsolicited favour. This custom is observed at Pulo Condore, Pegu, Cambodia, in Cochin-China, and in some districts of the coast of Guinea. In Otaheite, chastity did not seem to be considered as one of the virtues, nor was the most public violation of it looked upon either as criminal or indecent. The women not only readily and openly trafficked with the English sailors for personal favours, but were brought by their fathers and brothers for that purpose, as to a market; and those who brought them were always abundantly conscious of the superior value of youth and beauty.

Savage
women
destitute
of soft-
ness.

BESIDES a strict regard to chastity, there is in the female character a certain softness of temper and disposition, which may vie with delicacy, beauty, and even with modesty itself, in rendering a woman amiable in the eyes of the beholder. But of this quality savage women are every where almost entirely destitute. Brought up amidst
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the storms of rough and inhospitable climates; exposed to the vicissitudes of hunger and cold; obliged to procure most of their food by carnage and destruction; and constantly accustomed to scenes of cruelty; their hearts are steeled against every soft sensation; and pity, one of the most engaging ornaments of the female mind is reckoned a weakness, which it is incumbent on them to subdue. We have therefore no reason to expect in them any of that engaging softness, which constitutes the essence of female excellence, and forcibly engages the heart.

CHAP.
XII.

AMONG many of the tribes of North Americans, the women commonly go out to meet the warriors on their return home; and though these warriors have treated their captives, from the moment they fell into their hands, with an inhumanity of which we can hardly form any idea; yet the period of their real sufferings may be said only to commence at the time they are met by the women. It is almost incredible to believe, with what degree of transport and rage these furies attack them; and he only can form any conception of it, who has frequently witnessed the power of the passions over the

C H A P.
XII.

female mind, and their concentrated power over the female savage; where being but few in number, their whole strength is collected, as it were, into a focus. Has any woman among those who go out to meet the warriors, lost a husband, a son, a brother, or near relation; though thirty or forty long years have conspired to blot him out of her remembrance, they have conspired in vain. Frantic with revenge, she falls on the first captive she meets, and violates decency, humanity, and mercy, at every wound. Nor is this the short-lived effort of a sudden passion: she goes on till her bodily strength is quite exhausted; but the same insatiable thirst of revenge urging her implacable mind, she no sooner recovers herself a little, than she renews the horrid task; a task, which, with no other interruption than what is absolutely necessary to refresh the ferocious tormentor, generally continues in the camp, through the whole of the first night after the arrival of the women: and when the prisoners are afterward finally condemned, when they are led out to suffer, such a scene of torture as the history of no other people ever yet paralleled, and which we think too shocking to describe, the women

men are the principal executioners, or rather relentless fiends, who inflict tortures that even hell might shudder at. In South America, instead of making their prisoners suffer by a lingering death, they commonly dispatch them at one blow, which is no sooner done than the women seize the bodies and dress them for a feast; then besmearing their children with the blood, to inspire them with a hatred of their enemies, they all join to feed on the flesh, exulting in their triumph, and congratulating each other on their excellent repast.

To those accustomed to softer manners, and to nations less sullied by such inhuman crimes, this female barbarity must appear as unaccountable as it is shocking: but it must be still more so, when we inform our readers, that captive women, though they have not taken up the hatchet, nor come out in an hostile manner, are treated with the same indiscriminate rage of cruelty as men, and fall at last victims to the lingering tortures inflicted by their own sex.

SUCH is the state of chastity, such that of humanity, among the savage women of
North

CHAP.
XII.

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Cruelty
to cap-
tives not
peculiar
to Amer-
ica.

North America. But from these unpromising specimens we are not rashly to conclude, that they are destitute of every virtue, and of every excellence. Their inhumanity is not so much the effect of nature, as of education. Revenge is a principle, which, from the earliest antiquity, has operated strongly on every ignorant and unlettered people. The Israelites hardly treated their captives with less cruelty than the Americans. They made them pass through the brick-kilns, and under saws and harrows of iron. The practice of almost all the ancients was nearly the same; every country had its tutelary deities; and it was imagined, that a more acceptable service could not be rendered to these, than to stain their altars with the blood of the enemies of that country which they patronised. Thus, cruelty to captives was almost in every country a religious ceremony, which took such hold of the human mind, that all ideas of the sufferings of the victims, were totally absorbed in those of the service done to the deity. But, besides this, there was among the ancients another principle, which powerfully urged them to inflict various torments on their captives; the manes, or ghosts, of those who had fallen

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in battle, were supposed to roam about in a kind of melancholy mood, till their blood was avenged on their enemies; and, they were even sometimes said to appear to, and solicit their surviving friends to this vengeance; which was the more fully accomplished, the more horrid the tortures that were inflicted. If similar causes operate upon the Americans, we may thence infer, that the hopes of rendering an acceptable service to their gods, and an exuberance of friendship for their deceased relations, are the motives which excite them to inflict such a variety of torments on their enemies.

C H A P.
XII.
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WERE this horrid barbarity of the American women congenial to their nature, or what they delighted in from mere wantonness, we should reckon them the most execrable of all human beings; but we pity them, when we consider it as the effect of the most unbounded, though mistaken friendship; and indeed, of all the marks which most peculiarly characterise savage life, friendship and hatred are the strongest. As an injury done to a savage is never to be forgiven, so a good action is held in everlasting remembrance, and commonly fixes him to

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Causes of  
this cru-  
elty.

C H A P.  
XII.

you in a friendship which adversity cannot shake, which danger cannot terrify, nor even death itself turn aside from your interest. In places where chastity is required of the sex, this quality makes them the most faithful and inviolable of all wives. Where chastity is not required, if they are but tolerably well used by their husbands, it binds them in an attachment to their interests and persons, far surpassing any thing that we ever meet with in civil society. As to their other qualities, they are submissive and obedient; patient sufferers of hunger, cold, pain, and all that variety of wretchedness to which their lives are daily exposed; strenuous exerts of their powers, when stimulated by want, but seldom blessed with a talent for unremitting industry; and still seldomer, perhaps, with foresight enough to be productive of œconomy. Like all other ignorant people, the most absolute dupes of superstition, by which constantly deceived themselves, they constantly deceive one another, and still more deceive their men, who take the ravings of a distempered female brain, for the infallible suggestions of the *Great Spirit*.

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IN ascending from these scenes, where we are presented with nature in her most rude and uncultivated shape, to those where she is just beginning to put on an appearance something less disgusting, we naturally turn our eyes from the frozen regions and trackless wastes of North America, to the more indulgent climates of Africa and Asia; though we are sorry to say, that, even in many parts of these, we find the progress of civil society and cultivation of manners, to have advanced but a very few degrees beyond the Americans.

IN travelling over the vast peninsula of Africa, we naturally expect to find, among so many different people, a great diversity of manners and of character; in this, however, we are much disappointed; for, notwithstanding the great variety of climates that the Africans inhabit, and different forms of government to which they are subject, they are every where nearly the same kind of people; a general uniformity of sentiments and usages, runs through the whole of those immense regions they possess, with some trifling difference only in the degrees of the same qualities; and with this remark-

CHAP.  
XII.

able coincidence of the whole, that these qualities are commonly the worst of those which have disgraced human nature; inso-much that among their neighbours it is a proverb, that all the inhabitants of the globe have a mixture of good and evil in them, except the Africans.

WHEN we take a survey of the ancient, and the present Africans, it is with some surprize, that while we find their manners and customs to be nearly the same, we likewise discover that every spark of genius, and every idea of moral rectitude, seem now almost entirely dissipated from among them. The names of Hannibal, of Asdrubal, and Terence, shew that they were formerly famous for heroes, and for poets. After the introduction of the christian religion among them, the names of Cyprian, Augustine, and Tertullian, do credit to their divinity. They were in old time renowned for their industry in cultivating the ground, for their trade, navigation, caravans, and useful arts; at present they are infamous for their idleness, ignorance, superstition, treachery; and above all, for their lawless methods of robbing and murdering all the other inhabitants of the globe. It



It would seem, that lost as they are to almost every virtue, they still retain some sense of their own flagitiousness of character; but as they do not chuse to amend, their priests, or Marabouts, endeavour to justify them by the following story: “Noah, say  
 “they, was no sooner dead, than his three  
 “sons, the first of whom was white, the second tawny, and the third black; having  
 “agreed upon dividing among them his  
 “goods and possessions, spent the greatest  
 “part of the day in sorting them, so that  
 “they were obliged to adjourn the division  
 “till the next morning: having supped, and  
 “smoked a friendly pipe together, they all  
 “went to rest, each in his own tent. After  
 “a few hours sleep, the white brother got  
 “up, seized on the gold, silver, precious  
 “stones, and other things of the greatest  
 “value, loaded the best horses with them,  
 “and rode away to that country where his  
 “white posterity have been settled ever since.  
 “The tawny awaking soon after, and with  
 “the same criminal intention, was surprised  
 “when he came to the storehouse, to find  
 “that his brother had been before-hand with  
 “him, upon which, he hastily secured the

CHAP.  
XII.



“ rest of the horses and camels, and loading  
 “ them with the best carpets, cloaths, and  
 “ other remaining goods, directed his route  
 “ to another part of the world, leaving be-  
 “ hind him only a few of the coarsest of the  
 “ goods, and some provisions of little value.  
 “ When the third, or black brother, came  
 “ next morning, in the simplicity of his  
 “ heart, to make the proposed division, and  
 “ could neither find his brethren, nor any  
 “ of the valuable commodities, he easily  
 “ judged that they had tricked him, and  
 “ were by that time fled beyond any possi-  
 “ bility of a discovery. In this most afflict-  
 “ ing situation, he took his pipe, and began  
 “ to consider the most effectual means of  
 “ retrieving his loss, and being revenged  
 “ on his perfidious brothers. After revolv-  
 “ ing a variety of schemes in his mind, he  
 “ at last fixed upon watching every opportu-  
 “ nity of making reprisals on them, and  
 “ laying hold of, and carrying away their  
 “ property as often as it should fall in his  
 “ way, in revenge for the loss of that patri-  
 “ mony of which they had so unjustly  
 “ deprived him. Having come to this reso-  
 “ lution, he not only continued in the prac-  
 “ tice

“ tice of it all his life, but on his death-  
 “ bed laid the strongest injunctions on his  
 “ descendants, to do so to the end of the  
 “ world.

CHAP.  
XII.



FROM this short sketch of the general character of the Africans, the prospect before us, when we descend to particulars, is but unpromising, though in some places the gloomy scene is here and there chequered with a few of the virtues. Some tribes of Africans, when they have engaged themselves in the protection of a stranger, are remarkable for fidelity. Many of them are conspicuous for their temperance and hospitality, and their women, upon the whole, are far from being indelicate or unchaste. In Egypt, they never appear unveiled, and at public assemblies sit also behind a curtain, that they may not be seen by the men. Among the Hottentots, though they have no claim to delicacy, they are simple and inoffensive, chaste and submissive to their husbands. On the banks of the Niger, they are tolerably industrious, have a considerable share of vivacity, and, at the same time, a female reserve, which would do no discredit to a politer country: they are modest, affable, faithful,

Female  
character  
in differ-  
ent parts  
of Africa.

CHAP.  
XII.

faithful, an air of innocence appears in their looks, in their language, and gives a beauty to their whole deportment. When from the Niger, we approach toward the East, the African women degenerate in stature, complexion, sensibility, and chastity; even their language, like their features, and the soil they inhabit, is harsh and disagreeable, and their pleasures resemble more the transports of fury, than the gentle emotions communicated by agreeable sensations. Upon the western coast of Africa, is extended for a considerable way, a people called *Zafe Ibrahims*, or off-spring of Abraham; they have long flowing hair, and are much fairer than any other of the Africans; but what is most remarkable, they are not like the rest of their countrymen, addicted to plundering, nor to murder, being of a free, liberal, and hospitable spirit, much given to dancing and to songs, of which love is constantly the subject; and while in many other parts of Africa, both men and women paint in such a manner as to add to their deformity, they paint after nature, and improve the charms she has given, by such colours as have the nearest resemblance to her. To all this we may add, that they  
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are strictly taken care of by their parents, and on that account difficult of access to strangers.

CHAP.  
XII.


SOME travellers inform us, that among these people, all children born on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, are reckoned accursed, and exposed in the woods to expire by cold and hunger, or meet with a more merciful death from the jaws of the wild beasts; but so compassionate are the women, that in spite of the punishments threatened against them by the men, and of the more tremendous terrors held over them by superstition, they frequently steal, and bring up these children privately at the hazard of their own lives.

BEYOND the river Volta, in the country of Benin, and almost every where upon the Gold Coast, the women, though far from being famous for any of the virtues, would not be disagreeable in their looks, were it not for the abominable custom of marking their faces with scars, for the same purposes as our European ladies lay on paint. Though in few respects better than savages, there is  
a par-

CHAP.  
XII.

~ a particular opinion over all this country, which tends to humanise the mind; this is a firm persuasion, that to whatever place they remove themselves, or are by any accident removed, they shall after death return to their own country, which they consider as the most delightful in the universe. This fond delusive hope, not only softens the slavery to which they are often condemned in other countries, but also induces them to treat such strangers as come among them with much civility; being persuaded, that they are come there to enjoy paradise, and receive the reward of virtuous actions done in other countries. The people who border upon Zaara, are the most peaceable and good-natured of the Africans; their food is simple, and they bestow little labour in procuring it; they spend a great deal of their time in public amusements; but neither to these, nor to any other places of common resort, are the women ever admitted; assembled together in houses by themselves, they spend the time in employments and amusements, peculiar to their sex, at which no men are allowed to be present. This confinement, though not of so strict.



strict a nature as in many places of the world, CHAP.  
XII.  
has the effect that confinement generally has   
upon beings who ought to be free, it renders  
them less virtuous.

As we cannot give a minute and circum- Reflec-  
tions.  
stantial character of the African women; we  
shall conclude what we have to say on that  
subject, by observing, that when we look  
back upon this general and particular cha-  
racter we have drawn, we find the former,  
which, like all national characters, is drawn  
from the men, much worse than the latter,  
which we have chiefly taken from the wo-  
men; and perhaps even that former is not  
so bad as it is represented, being sketched  
out almost entirely, either by declaiming  
priests of their own nation, or by Europe-  
ans, who are strongly prejudiced against the  
Africans, on account of the losses they have  
sustained by their plunderings and depreda-  
tions. These things, no doubt, justly excite  
our indignation, and extort from us every  
ungracious epithet; but were we to have the  
character of the Europeans drawn by an  
African, would he have more reason to be  
indulgent to us? No; he might treat us with  
still greater severity; what a horrid scene

CHAP.  
XII

would he probably paint? he would delineate a people, who profess a religion, the precepts of which breathe nothing but gentleness and humanity, in spite of nature, and in spite of that religion, carrying away by fraud and force, every year, thousands of his helpless countrymen into slavery; he would tell how the merciless masters of these, exact from them a labour superior to their strength, and even suffer that strength to fail for want of sustenance;---he would tell of the whips, the tortures, and the deaths inflicted upon them, should they ever happen to consider themselves as human beings, or venture to assert the rights of nature and of humanity!---he would tell---but we desist from the dismal tale, as we feel ourselves almost transformed into Africans whilst we relate it.

General  
character  
of the  
Asiatics.

IN our progress from America to Africa, we have met with but little improvement in the manners and character of the people; when we proceed on our enquiry into Asia, we see that the inhabitants have only left the Africans a very few degrees behind them, almost in every thing but peacefulness of disposition and gentleness of manners.

While

While the African, like the tyger of his <sup>CHAP.</sup>  
forests, lies in wait to plunder and destroy; <sup>XII</sup>  
the Asiatic, contented with a little rice, and  
some of the simplest productions of nature,  
reclines beneath the shade, and gives labour  
and luxury to the winds.

THE beautiful scenes which present themselves on the banks of the Ganges, and along the plains of Hindostan, are almost beyond description. The air is perfumed at some seasons with the most delicious fragrance, arising from a variety of flowers and fruits, which yield a wholesome and refreshing nourishment, and the trees form a shade impenetrable to the rays of the sun. Here bountiful Nature has left the Asiatic nothing to pursue but pleasure; and hardly any thing else does he pursue. Relaxed by the climate, more than half of this pleasure consists in ease and indolence; which have taken such hold of the inhabitants, that a saying from one of their favourite authors is frequently in their mouths: "It is better  
" to sit still than to walk; better to sleep than  
" to awake; but death is best of all." If we may credit some modern travellers, so extravagant is their love of rest, that the women


CHAP.  
XII.



Allahabad can hardly be prevailed upon to reach out their hands to save their own children, when in danger of being trod to death by carriages passing along the street. Such is the picture of the Hindoos. The Mahometans have more activity, stronger passions, and a cruelty and ambition which the climate has not yet totally eradicated.

Sketches  
of the  
character  
of their  
women.

In considering the character of the Asiatic women, there are two things which chiefly claim our attention. The first is, that the narrow and limited sphere in which they move, almost entirely divests them of every characteristic distinction which arises from liberty and society. The second, that they are so closely shut up from the observation of all Europeans, that our accounts of them are either false and ridiculous, or extremely mutilated and imperfect. We may, however, observe of them in general, that as a spring bent by an external force is constantly endeavouring to restore itself; so they, unjustly deprived of their liberty, are constantly exerting all their powers to deceive the tyrants who have secluded them from the world, and the sweets of society; and long custom, the feelings of nature, and the desire  
of

of freedom, have made them great adepts <sup>CHAP.</sup> <sup>XII.</sup> in those arts of deception, which tend to procure them a temporary liberty, or favour an intrigue. 

CHASTITY and unchastity are almost the only things that can characterise the women of the East. Shut up for ever in impenetrable Harams, they can hardly be called creatures of the world, having no intercourse with it, and no use for the social and æconomical virtues which adorn its citizens. If being good wives consists in care, frugality and industry, these are all things entirely out of their power: if being such, consists in loving their husbands, and being tender to their children; the first of these is also rendered next to impossible by the behaviour of those tyrants who style themselves husbands; and the last is much weakened by transferring upon the children some part of that dislike they have to the father. To the joys of friendship they are, perhaps, entire strangers. The men treat them in such a manner, that it is impossible they can esteem them; the women are their constant rivals. The only virtues, then, which the Asiatic fair can put in practice, are such as relate to  
their

CHAP.  
XII.



their religion, and their chastity; but even in the exercise of religion they are circumscribed. As they are not allowed to attend on the public worship of the gods of their country, they can have no other religion than the silent adoration of the heart; and as to chastity, the manner in which they are disposed of to their husbands, and the behaviour of these husbands to them through life, are the most unlikely methods in the world to make them famous for that virtue.

Bramini-  
cal wo-  
men, their  
conduct.

BUT though these observations may be pretty generally applied to the Asiatic women, there are some exceptions. The Bramins, or priests of India, though, like the rest of their countrymen, they confine their women, yet, by treating them with lenity and indulgence, they secure their virtue by attaching their hearts. Married to each other in their infancy, they have the greatest veneration for the nuptial tie: their mutual fondness increases with their strength; and in riper years, all the glory of the wives consists in pleasing their husbands; a duty which they consider as one of the most sacred of their holy religion, and which the gods will not suffer them to neglect with impunity.

While

CHAP.  
XII.

While the rest of the Hindoo women take every opportunity to elude their keepers, these, voluntarily confine themselves, at least from the company and conversation of all strangers, and in every respect copy that simplicity of life and manners; for which their husbands are so remarkable.

Modesty  
of the  
Chinese  
women.

Of all the other Asiatics, the Chinese have perhaps the best title to modesty. Even the men wrap themselves closely up in their garments, and reckon it indecent to discover any more of their arms and legs than is necessary. The women, still more closely wrapped up, never discover a naked hand even to their nearest relations, if they can possibly avoid it. Every part of their dress, every part of their behaviour, is calculated to preserve decency, and inspire respect; and what adds the greatest lustre to their charms, is that uncommon modesty which appears in every look, and in every action. Charmed, no doubt, with so engaging a deportment, the men behave to them in a reciprocal manner; and that their virtue may not be contaminated by the neighbourhood of vice, the legislature takes care that no prostitutes shall lodge within the walls of any of the great

CHAP.  
XII.



great cities of China. Such are the Chinese women represented by some travellers; but it is by others doubted, whether this semblance of modesty be any thing else than the custom of the country; and alleged, that notwithstanding so much seeming decency and decorum, they have their peculiar modes of intriguing, and embrace every possible opportunity of putting them in practice; and that, in these intrigues, they frequently scruple not to stab the paramour they had invited to their arms, as the surest method of preventing detection and loss of character. A few, perhaps, of the most flagitious may be guilty of such enormous crimes; but we persuade ourselves, that they are only very few; and are happy to inform our fair readers, that such relations are not to be found in any of our modern travellers, whose veracity is most to be depended on.

Of the  
Fakiers.

So different in every country are the sects of saints, as well as of sinners, that besides the Bramins, a set of innocent religious priests, who have rendered their women virtuous by treating them with kindness and humanity, there is another sect of religious-philosophical drones, called *Fakiers*, who  
con-



Contribute as much as they can to debauch the sex, under a pretence of superior sanctity. These hypocritical saints, like some of the ridiculous sects which formerly existed in Europe; wear no clothes; considering them only as proper appendages to sinners, who are ashamed, because they are sensible of guilt; while they, being free from every stain of pollution, have no shame to cover. In this original state of nature, these pretended devotees assemble together, sometimes in armies of ten or twelve thousand, and under a pretence of going in pilgrimage to certain temples, like locusts devour every thing on their way; the men flying before them, and carrying all that they can out of the reach of their depredations; the women, not in the least afraid, throwing themselves in their way, or remaining quietly at home to receive them.

It has long been an opinion, established all over India, that there is not in nature so powerful a remedy for removing the sterility of women, as the prayers of these sturdy saints. On this account, barren women constantly apply to them for assistance; which when the good-natured Fakier has an incli-

CHAP.  
XII.

nation to grant, he leaves his slipper, or his staff, at the door of the lady's apartment with whom he is praying; a symbol so sacred, that it effectually prevents any one from violating the secrecy of their devotion. But, should he forget this signal, and at the same time be distant from the protection of his brethren, a sound drubbing is frequently the reward of his pious endeavours.

So much concerning the conduct of the Fakiers, in debauching women, seems certain. But it is by some travellers further related, that wherever they find a girl who is exceedingly handsome, they carry her off privately to one of their temples; but in such a manner, as to make her and the people believe, that she was carried away by the god who is there worshipped; who, being violently in love with her, took that method to procure her for his wife. This done, they perform a nuptial ceremony, and make her further believe, that she is married to the god; when, in reality, she is only married to one of the Fakiers who personates him. Women exalted to this imaginary dignity, are revered by the people as the wives of the gods; a ray of ideal divinity surrounds

surrounds and protects them from the vulgar, and secures them entirely to the Fakiers. In countries where reason is stronger than superstition, we almost think this impossible: where the contrary is the case, there is nothing too hard to be credited. Something like this was done by the priests of ancient Greece and Rome; and a few centuries ago, tricks of the same nature were practised by monks, and other libertines, upon some of the visionary and enthusiastic women of Europe. We will not therefore think it strange, that the Fakiers generally succeed in attempts of this nature; when we consider, that they only have to deceive a people brought up in the most consummate ignorance; and that nothing can be a more flattering distinction to female vanity, than for a woman to suppose herself such a peculiar favourite of the divinity she worships, as to be chosen, from all her companions, to the honour of being admitted to his embraces; a favour, which her self-admiration will dispose her more readily to believe than examine.

BESIDES these temples into which women are decoyed for the sake of debauchery, there

CHAB.  
XII.

Religion  
made sub-  
servient  
to prosti-  
tution.

are others where they are supplied with them in a more open manner; being voluntarily offered by their parents, and dedicated by the priests while infants, with great pomp and solemnity, to the service of their gods. Their office is to dance and sing before the chief idol on solemn festivals; with all the wantonness of venal charms, and temptation of loose attire, in order to attract the spectators, to whom they afterwards prostitute themselves for the benefit of the temple to which they belong. When such is the religion of the East, when such are the deities there worshipped, can we expect chastity to be a virtue much regarded by the women, or that the men can secure it by any other methods than locks, bars, and eunuchs?

BUT it is not the religion of the Hindoos only, that promotes unchastity; that of Mahomet, which now prevails over a great part of India, promotes it also. Mahometism every where indulges the men with a plurality of wives, while it ties down the women to the strictest conjugal fidelity; hence, while the men riot in unlimited variety, the women are, in great numbers, confined to share among them the scanty favours of one man only,

only. This unnatural and impolitic conduct induces them to seek by art and intrigue, what they are denied by the laws of their prophet. Some have imagined that this spirit of intrigue is the result of climate, but it rather appears to be the result of the injustice which women suffer by polygamy; for it seems to exert itself as much in every other place where polygamy is in fashion, as it does on the banks of the Ganges, or the Indus. The famous Montesquieu, whose system was, that the passions are entirely regulated by the climate, brings as a proof of this system, a story from the collection of voyages for the establishment of an East India Company, in which it is said, that at Patan, “the wanton desires of the women” are so outrageous, that the men are obliged “to make use of a certain apparel, to shelter them from their designs.” Were this story really true, it would be a very uncommon proof of the effect of climate, for why should the burning suns of Patan only influence the passions of the fair? Why should they there transport that sex beyond decency, which in all other climates is the most decent, and leave in so cool and defensive a state, that sex, which in all other climates is apt to be  
the

C H A P.  
XII



the most offensive and indecent? To whatever length the spirit of intrigue may be carried in Asia and Africa, however the passions of the women may prompt them to excite desire, and to throw themselves in the way of gratification, we have the strongest reason to reprobate all these stories, which would make us believe, that they are so lost to decency as to attack the other sex; such a system would be overturning nature, and inverting the established laws by which she governs the world.

Women  
of Ota-  
heite.

IN Otaheite, we are presented with women of a singular character. As far as we can recollect, we think it is a pretty general rule, that wherever the sex are accustomed to be constantly clothed, they are ashamed to appear naked: those of Otaheite seem however to be an exception to this rule; to shew themselves in public, with or without clothing, appears to them a matter of equal indifference; a circumstance from which we may reasonably infer, that, among them, clothes were not originally invented to cover shame, but either as an ornament, or a defence against the cold. As polygamy is not allowed in Otaheite, to satisfy the lust of variety,

variety, they have a society called Arreoy, CHAP.  
XII  
 in which every woman is common to every man; and when any of these women happens to have a child, it is smothered in the moment of its birth, that it may not interrupt the pleasures of its infamous mother; but in this juncture, should nature relent at so horrid a deed, even then the mother is not allowed to save her child, unless she can find a man who will patronise it as a father; in which case, the man is considered as having appropriated the woman to himself, and they are both extruded from this hopeful society. These few anecdotes sufficiently characterise the women of this island. In some of the adjacent ones, if they were not less unchaste, they were at least less flagitious and indelicate.

As the Turks, who now inhabit a part of Europe, were originally Asiatics, and still retain the manners and customs which they brought from that country, their women are much given to secret gallantry and intrigue; vices which seem however to be the worst part of their character: when we view them in the other departments of female life, we see many amiable qualities conspiring to adorn

Turkish ladies, their character.

C H A P.  
XII.

adorn them, as benevolence, charity, and a tenderness of feeling, and softness of disposition, to which they have hardly ever reached in the most polished parts of the Christian world. Lady Montague in her visit to the lady of the Grand Vizer of Constantinople, has delineated her humility, meekness, and charity, in a manner which does honour to the sex. In her visit to the fair Fatima, while we find the person of an angel, engaged in all the tender offices of a mother, we must be insensible to every feeling, if our hearts do not glow with the description. We are indeed but too apt to throw a veil over every virtue which adorns a people professing a religion so different from our own, and which we have always been taught to consider with partiality, and to look upon with horror; than which, nothing can more certainly indicate weakness of mind and want of urbanity. People of all religions have in them a mixture of vice and virtue; and, on a strict enquiry, we shall find, that vice oftener flows from a bad education and improper customs, than from a bad religion: but should the Mahometans, or any other people, with a religion less pure and holy than that of the Christians, be found to excel them



them in many of the moral virtues, they certainly on that account deserve the more praise, and we the more reprehension; especially when it is considered what they would probably have done, had they been in our situation.

WHEN we take a retrospective view of the characters we have just now drawn, a regard for the dignity of human nature, induces us to wish that impartial truth would allow us to have painted them more virtuous and perfect; and from the intercourse that has long subsisted between Europe and many of the countries we have been considering, some reformation in manners might reasonably have been expected. But the Europeans who have gone abroad, instead of demonstrating to the natives that they were superior to them in virtue as well as in knowledge, seem in general, the moment they left their own country, to have thrown aside every principle, and every idea, but that of amassing wealth; though at the expence of probity, and of conscience; and instead of introducing more order and regularity, have but too often given a loose to every voluptuous appetite, and outdone in every species of

CHAP.  
XII,

debauchery, those who were neither restrained by their laws, nor their religion. Nor has this flagitious conduct been peculiar to one European nation only, all those who have planted colonies, and extended their commerce, have been almost equally infamous for cruelty, oppression, and debauchery.

Soon after the Portuguese had conquered India, laying aside that martial spirit for which they were then so famous, they gave themselves up to all those excesses which render the human race odious, and became such monsters, that poison, conflagration, assassination, and every other crime, grew familiar to them. They massacred the natives; they destroyed one another; and while they raised the hatred of these natives, they lost the courage necessary to keep them in subjection. In the island of Amboyna, a Portuguese at a public festival, seized upon a beautiful woman, and regardless of decency, proceeded to force her to his hated embrace. One of the islanders resenting so flagitious a conduct, first armed his fellow-citizens; and afterward calling together the Portuguese, addressed them in the following manner:



manner: " To revenge affronts of so cruel  
 " a nature as these we have received from  
 " you, would require actions, not words;  
 " yet we will speak to you. You preach to  
 " us a Deity, who delights, you say, in ge-  
 " nerous actions; but theft, murder, obse-  
 " nity, and drunkenness, are your common  
 " practices. Your hearts are inflamed with  
 " every vice; our manners can never agree  
 " with yours. Nature foresaw this, when she  
 " separated us by immense oceans, but ye  
 " have overleaped her barriers: this audacity,  
 " of which you are not ashamed to boast, is  
 " a proof of the corruption of your hearts.  
 " Take my advice, leave to their repose these  
 " nations that resemble you so little: go, fix  
 " your habitations among those who are  
 " brutal as yourselves. An intercourse with  
 " you would be more fatal to us, than  
 " all the evils which it is in the power  
 " of your god to inflict upon us. We re-  
 " nounce your alliance forever. Your arms  
 " are superior to ours, but we are more just  
 " than you, and we do not fear you; the  
 " *Itons* are from this day your enemies, fly  
 " from their country, and beware how you  
 " approach it any more." Such were the  
 sentiments of one whom we should blush to  
 call a savage.

CHAP.  
XII.

WHEN a governor of sense and humanity happened to preside over the Portuguese colonies, he endeavoured to reform the manners, and restrain the rapacity, of his countrymen; but his single virtue was always feeble and unavailing, when opposed to the vices of a contaminated people. The Spaniards, who in many places succeeded the Portuguese, not only copied, but even in time greatly exceeded them in every vice that could make human nature appear monstrous. Few of our readers can be strangers to the cruelties and debaucheries they committed in Mexico and Peru, where they built churches, endeavoured to explain the mysteries of the christian religion to the natives, in a language of which they did not understand one word; and afterward piously slaughtered them as heretics, for not believing what had been so clearly demonstrated to them. When they had conquered the island of Hispaniola, they made peace with the inhabitants, on condition that they should cultivate all the land for their use, and furnish them with a certain quantity of gold every month. The poor wretches, finding the task insupportable, as well as impossible, took shelter in their mountains, where they hoped

to maintain themselves till their oppressors should be obliged by famine to evacuate their island. But the Spaniards, in the mean time receiving a supply of provisions from Europe, pursued them to their fastnesses; to revenge, as they said, the injustice they had suffered; trained their dogs to hunt and destroy them, in places which to themselves were inaccessible; and, fired with superstition and a thirst of blood, some of them made a vow to destroy twelve Indians every day, in honour of the twelve Apostles. What uneasiness would it have given to men so mild and benevolent, had they foreseen that their names would be prostituted to such infamous purposes!

HUMANITY recoils at this dismal recital, and sincerely wishes, that the other powers who have usurped a right in the Indies, could be absolved from similar crimes; but the immense plunder lately brought to England from the plains of Hindostan, are but too evident proofs of what our countrymen have there committed. Such loads of treasure are not the gradual produce of the arts of peace, nor even of fields disfigured by the horrors of war; unless that war, like a deluge,

CHAP.  
XII.

deluge, indiscriminately levels friend and enemy as it goes along. Avarice, sordid avarice, seems alone to have occupied the breasts of the greatest part of those who have travelled from Europe to India; and from so fruitful a source has sprung up almost every other crime. But the vices are not solely attached to the men who have left Europe in pursuit of gain: even the women who have accompanied them, leaving behind them the gentleness of European manners and of female nature, have been often hardly less distinguished for debauchery and cruelty than the men. A virago of this sort in the East or West Indies, seldom meeting with any opposition to her whim and caprice, assumes at last a spirit of more than masculine tyranny; and lost to feeling and humanity, wields the whip with such dexterity, as at every stroke to fetch blood from the back of the naked and unresisting slave; whose only fault was, that he did not anticipate the wishes of his mistress, or because he had the presumption to consider himself as a creature of the same genus with herself.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XIII.

*The same Subject continued.*

**A**FTER having traced the character of C H A P.  
XIII.  
the fair sex through so many countries, where so much of our colouring has been employed to paint the vicious and the disagreeable, we now with the utmost pleasure turn towards Europe, where the beauties of their character, like those of their persons, will not only engage our attention, but also attract our hearts. We cannot, however, extend our plan so far as to hold up to view every beauty and every blemish, which gives a lustre or a deformity to the fair, through all the different countries of Europe; we shall therefore only endeavour to draw the outlines of characters, too various and complicated for us to finish with any tolerable degree of precision.

WE have already observed, that chastity has, in all polished nations, ever been esteemed the principal ornament of the female character; and we now aver, that this

General sketch of the character of European women.  
was

CHAP.  
XIII.

was never more remarkably the case, in any part of the world, than at present in Europe. Here we worship no deities that delight in debauchery, as among the ancients; nor such as, regardless of moral good and evil, concern not themselves about human actions, as in some parts of the world, among the moderns. Hence the conduct of our women, besides being influenced by the superior regard paid to chastity among us, is still further influenced by a veneration for that purity of manners and of character, so strongly inculcated by the precepts of the Christian religion; and hence, though declaimers and satirists in every nation of Europe, paint their own women as the most lewd and abandoned in the world, we boldly affirm, that Europe, in general, is more famous for the chastity and other good qualities of its women, than any other part of the globe; for the truth of this we need only appeal to the personal experience of the traveller, and to the reading of the historian, both which afford an ample demonstration of our assertion. We must, however, observe here, that the virtues of modesty and chastity do not flourish most, where they are endeavoured to be forced upon the  
women



women by locks, bolts, and gouvernantes, as in Spain; nor where unrestrained liberty and politeness are carried to the greatest length, as in France and Italy; but rather, where refinement is not arrived so far, as to reckon every restraint upon inclination a mark of rustication and ill-breeding.

CHAP.  
XIII.



IN endeavouring to sketch some rude draughts of the character of the European women, we shall take a view of them as they appear in the principal nations of which it is composed; and as the French reckon themselves of all other people the most conspicuous, we shall begin with them; a distinction to which they are at least in one sense entitled, as they are the fruitful source of half the fashions that embellish, and perhaps of more than half the foibles that disgrace, Europe.

As chastity is a virtue which does not seem to flourish in a soil, where too much or too little culture is bestowed upon it, we must not expect to find it remarkably vigorous among the French, where politeness is the first of all the virtues, and chastity hardly entitled to a place as the second. When

Of the  
French  
women.

C H A P.  
XIII.

travellers, who have always been accustomed to countries where women are much on the reserve, enter France, where the very reverse is the case; before they have coolly considered the customs of different countries, they are apt to conclude that the French have no decency, and no chastity among them. Such conclusions are, however, by much too hasty. We must not be led by appearances. A French woman of the most unblemished reputation will, in compliance with the customs of her country, speak and act with a levity and freedom, which in England would be almost an infallible indication of a strumpet; while in France it only indicates, that a woman has seen the world. We would not, however, insinuate from this, that chastity is among the French a prevailing virtue. The number of mistresses kept by the married as well as the single. The little discredit thrown on the profession of a prostitute, especially if she is an Opera girl, are proofs of the contrary; to which we may add, the spirit of intrigue, which is fashionable among both sexes; and in France, not to be fashionable, is a condition much more dreaded, than not to be virtuous.

IN every country women have always a little to do, and a great deal to say. In France, notwithstanding of the Salique law, they dictate almost every thing that is said, and direct every thing that is done. They are the most restless beings in the world; ever in the hurry of action, either about their own business. or that of other people; and equally solicitous about settling the affairs of the nation, or sticking a pin in its proper place. To fold her hands in idleness and impose silence on her tongue, would be to a French-woman worse than death. The sole joy of her life is to be engaged in the prosecution of some scheme, the more intricate and arduous the better; and so much the better still, if fashion, ambition, or love be the subject. Among the rich and opulent, they are entirely the votaries of pleasure, which they pursue through all its labyrinths, at the expence of fortune, reputation, and health. Giddy and extravagant to the last degree, they leave to their husbands œconomy and care, which would only spoil their complexions, and furrow their brows. When we descend to tradesmen and mechanics, the case is reversed; the wife manages every thing in the house and

CHAP. XIII. shop, while the husband lounges in the back-shop an idle spectator, or struts about with his sword and bag-wig.

MATRIMONY in France, is a thing entirely different from what it is in all other parts of Europe; it does not there subject the hapless female to obedience, to duty, or even to fidelity, but gives her a right to an unbounded liberty and the fortune of her husband, while it confers on the husband hardly any right but that of calling her his wife. In fashionable life, and indeed among all ranks, as all aspire at being fashionable, it seems to be a bargain entered into by a male and female to bear the same name, live in the same house, and pursue their separate pleasures without restraint or controul: and so religiously is this part of the bargain kept, that both parties shape their course exactly as convenience and inclination dictate. Spurning the joys of friendship at home, and contemning the censure of the world abroad; they live in the same house, but seldom see each other, having different apartments, different sets of acquaintance, different servants, a different equipage, and different tables. Jealousy is not to be expected here,  
it

it is a monster which springs from love; but as a French couple marry without love, they live without jealousy, and commonly jog through life together, enjoying but little happiness, and feeling perhaps no misery on account of each other,

CHAP.  
XIII.



IN the midst of every levity and fashionable folly, there is no part of the world where the company of men of letters is more acceptable to the fair sex than in France; a circumstance, which, while it diffuses knowledge among the women, gives an elegance and cheerfulness to the men, and renders them men of the world as well as of learning; and a circumstance, which has taught many of the French women the valuable secret of reconciling pleasure to improvement. But a secret so valuable, and so rare among the sex, is not entirely owing to this circumstance, education also has a share in it. Brought up for the most part in convents, books are often the only means they have of beguiling the tedious hours of lonely inactivity, and a fondness for them once contracted, the habit frequently remains for life. Hence it happens, that such is female influence over literature, as well as over every

Learning  
of the  
French  
women.

C. H. A. P.  
XIII.



every other thing in France, that by much the greatest part of the productions of the press are calculated for their capacity; and happy is the author who meets their approbation, it is the ladder by which he must climb to fame, and the fountain which will assuredly yield him profit.

Ease and  
gaiety of  
the French  
women.

It is the property of real and unaffected politeness, to banish all that stiffness, and throw aside those airs of reserve, which in every country appear more conspicuous as the inhabitants approach more towards barbarism. In no country does this politeness manifest itself more than in France, where, the company of the women is accessible to every man who can recommend himself by his dress, and by his address. To affectation and prudery the French women are equally strangers; easy and unaffected in their manners, their politeness has so much the appearance of nature, that one would almost believe no part of it to be the effect of art. An air of sprightliness and gaiety sits perpetually on their countenances, and their whole deportment seems to indicate, that their only business is to strow the path of life with flowers. Persuasion hangs on their

their lips, and though their volubility of tongue is indefatigable, so soft is their accent, so lively their expression, so various their attitudes, that they fix the attention for hours together on a tale of nothing\*. In short, if a man is not too far gone in the spleen, there is no cure so certain as the company of a lively French-woman; but if he is totally over-run with that disease, her company will augment every symptom, and he will paint her as a late snarling traveller did; all folly and impertinence.

CHAP.  
XIII.

THE peculiar province of beauty is to captivate at the first sight, and to retain the captive in chains, only for the short time that is necessary to discover they were forged by beauty alone. The French women in general, not being remarkable for beauty, seldom jump into the affections of a man all at once, but gain upon him by degrees, and practise every female art to retain him

Their  
levity.

\* The Jewish doctors have a fable concerning the etymology of the word Eve, which one would almost be tempted to say is realized in the French women. "Eve, say they, comes from a word which signifies "to talk, and she was so called, because soon after the creation, there fell from heaven twelve baskets full of chit chat, and she picked up "nine of them, while her husband was gathering the other three.

CHAP.  
XIII.

in their service, as long as inclination or convenience shall dictate. But the wind, or the fashions which she follows, are hardly more inconstant than a French lady's mind; her sole joy is in the number of her admirers, and her sole pride in changing them as often as possible; over the whole of them she exercises the most absolute power, and they are zealously attentive even to prevent her wishes, by performing whatever they think she has any inclination to. Their time, their interest, and activity, are wholly devoted to her will, or rather to her caprice, and they must not presume to exempt any talent or power from the most slavish servitude to her pleasure. Even the purse, that most inaccessible thing about a Frenchman, must pour out its last sous, at the call of his mistress; and should he fail in this particular, he would be immediately discarded from her train, with the disgrace of having preferred Mercury to Venus, which would effectually prevent him from ever gaining admittance into the train of any other of the fair; a mortification exceedingly unfashionable, and to a Frenchman almost intolerable.

THE





THE French women reckon themselves the only ones in the world who can dress with elegance, and behave with ease; and it would seem by the influence they have gained in leading every fashion, and dictating every mode of behaviour, that even the rest of Europe has not denied them this pre-eminence; hence they have contracted a national pride, which makes them too frequently look down on the inhabitants of all other countries as miserable beings, only a few degrees above savage barbarity. While a French-woman is able to drink at the stream of pleasure, she is generally an atheist; as her taste for that diminishes, she becomes gradually religious, and when she has lost it altogether, is the most bigotted devotee. Even maternal affection must not interrupt the business of pleasure; few women therefore who can afford to do otherwise, nurse their own children, or take care of them while young. But to conclude; on comparing the different accounts of the French females with each other, we are of opinion, that they rather sacrifice too much of their delicacy to wit, and of their chastity to good-breeding; that they pay too little regard to character, and too much to a

CHAP.  
XIII.

ridiculous opinion, that fashionable people are above it; that in fine, they are too much the creatures of art, and have almost discarded nature as much from their feelings as from their faces.

Of the  
Italian  
women.

IF chastity is none of the most shining virtues of the French, it is still less so of the Italians. Almost every traveller who has visited Italy, agrees in describing it as the most abandoned of all the countries of Europe. At Venice, at Naples, and indeed in almost every part of Italy, women are taught from their infancy, the various arts of alluring to their arms the young and unwary, and of obtaining from them, while heated by love or wine, every thing that flattery and false smiles can obtain in these unguarded moments; so venal are the women, and so little infamous is the trade of prostitution, that hardly any rank or condition sets them above being bribed to it, nay they are even frequently assisted by their male friends and acquaintances to drive a good bargain, and what is still more extraordinary, their mothers; these mothers who should be the guardians and protectors of their virtue, authoritatively debauch it, and shame-



shamefully traffic with the highest bidder for the enjoyment of their daughters, alleging in defence of such an infamous practice, that they do so in order to procure as much money as may gain them admittance into a Nunnery, where they may leisurely repent of all the sins they have committed; as if religion and debauchery were by these means to be reconciled to each other. But it is not in this instance only that they strive to reconcile these opposite principles. When they have made the best bargain they can with a gallant, they reserve to themselves one day in the week to dedicate to prayer and their patron saint, and set up an image of the Virgin Mary in their apartments, before which they let down a curtain when they exercise their trade, and draw it up again when they say their prayers. Nor does their career of debauchery finish with their unmarried state: the vows of fidelity which they make at the altar, are like the vows made upon too many other occasions, only considered as nugatory forms, which law has obliged them to take, but custom absolved them from performing. They even claim and enjoy greater liberties after marriage than before; every married woman has a *cicisbio*,

CHAP.  
XIII.

or gallant, who attends her to all public places, hands her in and out of her carriage, picks up her gloves or fan, and a thousand other little offices of the same nature; but this is only his public employment, as a reward for which, he is entitled to have the lady as often as he pleases at a place of retirement sacred to themselves, where no person, not even the most intrusive husband dare enter, to be witnesses of what passes between them. This has been considered by people of all other nations, as a custom not altogether consistent with chastity and purity of manners; the Italians themselves, however, endeavour to justify it in their conversations with strangers, and Baretti has of late published a formal vindication of it to the world. In this vindication he has not only deduced the original of it from pure Platonic love, but would willingly persuade us that it is still continued upon the same mental principles; a doctrine which the world will hardly be credulous enough to swallow, even though he should offer more convincing arguments to support it than he has already done.



IF the French women are remarkable for a national pride, which induces them to look with a mixture of pity and contempt upon every female who is unfortunate enough to belong to any other country, the Italians are not less remarkable for a family pride, which instigates them to despise, as beings beneath their notice, every one who cannot reckon up a long line of illustrious ancestors; and indeed they often behave as if they were persuaded, that a descent of this kind conferred upon them a dignity and worth, which all their own worthless insignificance cannot possibly stain or destroy. The Spaniards carry this family pride even farther than the Italians, and the Germans, perhaps, still farther than they. In other respects the women of Italy approach nearer to the French, than those of any of the European kingdoms; they are not quite so gay and volatile, nor do they so much excite the risibility of the spectator; but by the softness of their language, and their manner, they more forcibly engage the heart; they are not so much theameleon or the weathercock, but have some decent degree of permanency in their connections, whether of love or friendship; not, like the French, careless

CHAP.  
XIII.



careless and divested of jealousy, but often suffering it to transport them to the most unwarrantable actions.

Spanish  
women,  
their cha-  
racter.

As in our sketches of those of France, we have almost in every other particular characterised the women of Italy, we shall now pass on to Spain; a kingdom whose inhabitants we are less acquainted with, and less able to characterise, than the Hottentots, or the Indians on the banks of the Ganges. This circumstance we owe to the Spaniards having formerly almost totally shut up their country from the intrusion of strangers, and to the genius of the most modern travellers, who, in passing through it, have hardly deigned to take notice of any thing that was not stamped at least with the rust of a thousand years. From the little, however, which we learn of the travellers who have visited Spain, that people have no great reason to boast of the security in which they suppose they have placed the chastity of their women, by the assistance of locks, bars, and old duennas. Chastity cannot be properly secured but by virtue, and virtue never yet was instilled by force. The Spaniards have at last attained sensibility enough

enough to discover this: their locks and bars are falling into disuse; nor has this freedom made their women less attentive to the virtues that adorn the female character.

CHAP.  
XIII.



THERE is in the Spaniards a native dignity; which, though the source of many inconveniences, has nevertheless this salutary effect, that it sets them above almost every species of meanness and infidelity. Nor is this a quality peculiar to the men; it diffuses itself in a great measure among the women also; and its effects are visible, both in their constancy in love and friendship, in which respects they are the very reverse of the French women. Their affections are not to be gained by a bit of sparkling lace, or a tawdry set of liveries; nor are they to be lost by the appearance of still finer. Their deportment is rather grave and reserved; and, on the whole, they have much more of the prude than the coquette in their composition. Being more confined at home, and less engaged in business and pleasure, they take more care of their offspring than the French, and have a becoming tenderness in their disposition to all animals, but an heretic and a rival. Something more than a century

CHAP.  
XIII.

tury ago, the Marquis D' Astrogas, having prevailed on a young woman of great beauty to become his mistress, the Marchioness hearing of it, went to her lodgings with some assassins, killed her, tore out her heart, carried it home, made a ragout of it, and presented the dish to the Marquis; "it is exceedingly good," said he, "no wonder," answered she, "since it is made of the heart of that creature you so much doated on;" and to confirm what she had said, she immediately drew out her head all bloody from beneath her hoop, and rolled it on the floor, her eyes sparkling all the time with a mixture of pleasure and infernal fury.

SOME centuries ago, the Spaniards were the greatest slaves in the world to form and etiquette; the manner in which their monarchs and grandees should behave on every occasion, was not only prescribed, but, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable. The habits they were to wear on such days, the time they were to spend in the country and in the town, the airings they were to take, the processions they were to join in, the hour at which they were to go





go to bed at night, and to rise in the morning, were all registered in a book kept for the purpose. This etiquette was peculiarly hard upon the Queens of Spain, they were not to look out at a window, nor to be touched on certain parts of the body upon pain of death; a restriction which had almost proved fatal to the consort of Charles II. One day going to take an airing, she mounted a spirited horse, the animal reared and threw her, her foot hung in the stirrup, the horse grew distracted and ran furiously along, all the court saw her danger, but it was death to touch her ankle, and she could not otherways be disentangled. The King himself being a spectator of the accident, cried out to those about him to assist her, the law forbade the assistance he asked, and nobody for some time offered to stir. At last one gentleman caught the horse by the bridle, and another, at the risque of his life, disengaged the Queen's foot; both immediately disappeared in the croud, and galloping home, took fresh horses and fled. When the Queen recovered from her fright, she desired to see her deliverers, a nobleman informed her that they were fled, to avoid the punishment threatened by law against

CHAP.  
XIII.

those who should touch the ankle of a Queen of Spain. The Queen, who was a French-woman, and ignorant of this prerogative of her ankle, solicited their pardon, obtained it in form, and having recalled them to court, made each of them a present suitable to the merit of his service.

THE Spaniards are indulgent almost beyond measure to their women, and there are several situations in which they take every advantage of this indulgence. A kept mistress has, by indisputable custom, a right to a new suit of clothes, according to the quality of her keeper, as often as she is blooded; and it is only feigning a slight illness, and being on a proper footing with the Doctor, to procure this as often as she pleases. A lady to whom a Cavallero pays his addresses, is sole mistress of his time and money; and should he refuse her any request, reasonable or capricious, it would reflect eternal dishonour upon him among the men, and make him the detestation of all the women. But in no situation does their character appear so whimsical, or their power so conspicuous, as when they are breeding. In this case, whatever they long for,

for, whatever they ask, or whatever they have an inclination to do, they must be indulged in. But this whimsical indulgence is sometimes used improperly; for it has been known, that young men who could not gain admittance to the wives of others, whom they wanted to debauch, have dressed themselves like women with child, and in this disguise carried on their intrigues unsuspected.

CHAP.  
XIII.



It would greatly exceed the limits we have prescribed to ourselves, were we to give a minute detail of the character and conduct of the women in every country of Europe; we shall therefore confine our subject to a few observations of a more general nature than those we have just now exhibited. Though the Germans are rather a dull and phlegmatic people, though not greatly enslaved by the warmer passions, yet at the court of Vienna they are much given to intrigue; and an amour is so far from being scandalous, that a woman gains credit by the rank of her gallant, and is reckoned silly and unfashionable, if she scrupulously adheres to the virtue of chastity. But such customs, it is hoped, are more the

General  
observa-  
tions 'on  
the Euro-  
pean wo-  
men.

CHAP.  
XIII.



customs of courts, than of places less exposed to temptation, and consequently less dissolute; and we are well assured, that in all the nations we have mentioned, there are many women who do honour to humanity, not by chastity only, but also by a variety of other virtues,

THE greatest part of the other European nations, not having yet arrived at that point in the scale of politeness, where nature begins to be discarded, and religion obliterated, their women are of course less the votaries of the Cyprian goddess. In Great-Britain, most parts of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Prussia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Russia, chastity is still a fashionable virtue, and the other female virtues attend in her train. Indelicacy is not substituted for wit, nor are double entendres almost ever heard from the lips of any female above an oyster-wench or a prostitute. Some women, indeed, of the higher ranks in England have of late set scandal at defiance, and laughed at character; but they have commonly found themselves engaged in an unequal contest; the lash of scandal has made them smart, in spite of their seeming  
indiffer-

Indifference ; and their want of a good character has excluded them almost from every company, and of course from more than half the joys of life. Their pernicious example is, however, in our opinion, not widely diffused. Our women are, in general, chaste and delicate ; and while we do not give improper countenance to those who have acted otherwise, will continue to be so. But should the unhappy period ever arrive, when our men shall not distinguish between her who is virtuous, and her who is not, the character we have here given of our women will no longer exist, and we shall have ourselves to blame for having destroyed it.

BUT besides the virtues of modesty and chastity, in which the women of Europe far surpass all others, they are not less distinguishable for many other good qualities both of the head and of the heart. It is only in some of the politer European nations, we meet with that inexpressible softness and delicacy of manners, which, cultivated by education, appears as much superior to what it does without it, as the polished diamond appears superior to that which is rough from the mine. In all other parts of the world,  
women

CHAP.  
XIII.

women have attained to so little knowledge, and so little consequence, that we consider their virtues as merely of the negative kind. In Europe they consist not only in abstinence from evil; but in doing good. There we see the sex every day exerting themselves in acts of benevolence and charity, in relieving the distresses of the body, and binding up the wounds of the mind; in reconciling the differences of friends, and preventing the strife of enemies; and, to sum up all, in that care and attention to their offspring, which is so necessary and essential a part of their duty.

It has been alleged as a proof of female weakness, that the sex are more susceptible of religious impressions, and less apt to examine them, than the men. That their minds are more attuned to the soothing ideas of religion, we readily allow; and we as confidently affirm, that to this quality they owe much of their charms, and we, our knowledge of a religion, whose precepts breathe the purest morality, hold out the surest means of attaining happiness on earth, and eternal felicity in heaven. Women by their influence, first disseminated this  
sublime

sublime religion in most parts of Europe. CHAP.  
XIII  
It was brought to Russia by a sister of the emperor Constantine, who was married to King Jarisslaus. Miceslaus, duke of Poland, was converted to it by his wife. It was carried by the same means into Bulgaria, and when it was nearly eradicated in England, it was again revived by the daughter of Childebert of France, who was married to Ethelbert. We might enumerate more kingdoms into which christianity was introduced by women, but we conclude with observing that, if credulity be among the number of their faults, it is not always an undiscerning credulity, and in this last instance has turned out greatly to our advantage.

BUT, as impartial historians, we hold not up the fair side of the picture only, but shall turn to the other also. This less lovely side, however, we shall present to our female readers, without any of the sourness of the declaimer, or the sarcastical sneering of the satirist; being fully sensible, especially when we address ourselves to the softer sex, that a reproof is half lost, where ill-nature is joined; and having only in view, the improvement of their understandings, and  
leading

C H A P.  
XIII.

leading them by gentle arts to those paths of rectitude and decorum, from which some of them have deviated.

THOUGH we have declared it as our opinion, that there is in Europe more female virtue than in any other place on the globe, yet even here, we find women liable to a variety of foibles and failings. As chastity is so highly valued in almost all the nations of our continent, we often meet with women who are foolish enough to persuade themselves, and endeavour to persuade the world, that the possession of it can atone for the want of every other thing amiable and virtuous; and if any one is hardy enough to hint at their faults, they answer with no small severity, in the cant phrase, "*I am an honest woman, at least.*"

THERE is amongst us another female character, which we denominate the *outrageously virtuous*. Women of this stamp never fail to seize all opportunities of exclaiming, in the bitterest manner, against every one upon whom even the slightest suspicion of indiscretion or unchastity has fallen; taking care, as they go along, to magnify



magnify every mole-hill into a mountain, and every thoughtless freedom into the blackest enormity. But besides the illiberality of thus treating such as may frequently be innocent, you may credit us, dear countrywomen, when we aver; that such a behaviour, instead of making you appear more virtuous, only draws down upon you, by those who know the world, suspicions not much to your advantage. Your sex are in general suspected by ours, of being too much addicted to scandal and defamation; these crimes, however, we persuade ourselves you are less guilty of than is commonly believed. But there is another, of a nature not more excusable, from which we cannot so much exculpate you; it is, that harsh and forbidding appearance you put on, and that ill-treatment, which you think necessary to bestow upon vice, for the illustration of your own virtue. A behaviour of this nature, besides being so opposite to that meek and gentle spirit which should distinguish female nature, is in every respect contrary to the charitable and forgiving temper of the Christian religion, and infalliably shuts the door of repentance against an unfortunate sister, willing, perhaps, to abandon the vices

C H A P.  
XIII.

into which heedless inadvertency had plunged her, and from which none of you can promise yourselves an absolute security.

WE wish not, fair countrywomen, like the declaimer and satirist, to paint you all vice and imperfection, nor, like the venal panegyrist, to exhibit you all virtue. As impartial historians, we confess that you have, in the present age, many virtues and good qualities, which were either nearly or altogether unknown to your ancestors; but do you not exceed them in some follies and vices also? Is not the levity, dissipation, and extravagance of the women of this century carried rather too far? Is not the course which you steer in life, almost entirely directed by fashion and pleasure? And are there not too many of you, who, throwing aside reason and reflection, and despising the counsel of your friends and relations, seem determined to follow the mode of the world, however it may be directed by folly, and however it may be contaminated with vice? Do not you dress, and appear, above your station, and are not many of you ashamed to be seen performing the duties of it? To sum up all, do not too, too many of you act  
as



as if you thought the care of a family, and the other domestic virtues, beneath your attention, and that the sole end for which you were sent into the world, was to please and divert yourselves, at the expence of those poor wretches the men, whom you consider as obliged to support you in every kind of idleness and extravagance? While such is your conduct, and while the contagion is every day increasing, you are not to be surprised that the men, though fond of you as playthings in the hours of mirth and revelry, shun at other times every serious connection with you; and while they wish to be possessed of your charms, are so much afraid of your manners and conduct, that they prefer the cheerless state of a bachelor, to the numberless evils arising from being tied to a modern wife.

WE shall conclude this chapter with a few general observations on the characteristic differences of the past and present ages of the world. Such, among many, is the partiality of admiring whatever is past, and despising whatever is present, that every thing stamped with the rust of remote antiquity must infallibly be good and virtuous,

Difference  
between  
the past  
and pre-  
sent times

CHAP.  
XIII.



and every thing of a modern date as unquestionably insignificant and vicious. According to such, the times of the patriarchs were the best and happiest periods of the world, even so much so, that they were distinguished by the splendid title of golden age, while our modern times are branded with the epithet of the age of iron. To enhance the value of this golden age, many authors of considerable merit have laboured to persuade us, that the earth brought forth her fruit spontaneously, that the lion and the tyger were harmless as the lamb, and that mankind, free from pride, ambition, avarice, and all the sordid and tumultuous passions, lived in the most happy security and simplicity; and some have even gone so far, as to represent these times as exempted from those infirmities to which nature, folly, and climate, have always subjected humanity.

SUCH authors as we have mentioned would make us believe, that vice and folly were equally unknown to the happy beings they have placed in the first ages of the world; but all that remains of the history of these ages, teaches quite another doctrine, and demonstrates that, almost from the remotest




most antiquity, there were wars, entered into with the most flagrant injustice, and carried on with the most shocking inhumanity; murders and robberies constantly committed, and wanton cruelties often executed without any provocation; that brother cheated in the most solemn manner his brother; that the fair sex were maltreated and abused; and in fine, that a savage barbarity of manners subjected every thing to superior strength. They would likewise persuade us, that pomp and luxury were then altogether unknown; but these are only comparative, not absolute terms; as what might well deserve the name of luxury in one period, would be the utmost simplicity in another. We grant indeed, that those elegant pleasures which are the result of knowledge, industry, and the fine arts, had then no existence; but they had a pomp and a luxury proportioned to their riches, and to the pleasures with which they were acquainted, and in these they exerted, nay even overstretched themselves perhaps as much as in our modern times,

THOSE abandoned cities which were consumed by fire from heaven, need not be brought

CHAP.  
XIII.

~~~~ brought as examples of the total corruption of ancient manners. We have unhappily too many other proofs of it, and of these the diffidence that every one then entertained of his neighbour, is not the weakest. Abraham and Isaac, both apprehended that they would be slain for the sake of their wives; and it was no uncommon thing for a man to require an oath of his neighbour that he would do him no harm. The stories of Judah and Tamar, his daughter-in-law, and of the rape of Dinah, give us some idea of the debauchery and injustice which then reigned upon the earth. Judah condemned Tamar to suffer death for the crime that he had committed with her, and the perfidious sons of Jacob slew the Schemites after they had ratified a treaty of peace with them in the most solemn manner. Nor were fidelity and honour more respected in private than in public life; Jacob bargained with his uncle to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel; when the service was accomplished, Laban shamefully imposed upon him Leah, and had even the effrontery to justify what he had done, and exact another seven years service for Rachel. Jacob deceived his brother Esau; and the sons of  
Jacob

Jacob sold Joseph their brother as a slave. CHAP.
Such were mankind in the patriarchal ages. XIII.


WHEN we trace their character through the subsequent periods mentioned in the Old Testament, we meet with a numerous list of the same enormities and crimes. When from this sacred repository, we turn towards the traditions and fragments of the history of other nations, they do not give us a more favourable idea of these primitive times; from them we learn, that men lived at first without government, and without law, without mutual confidence, or mutual friendship; passion and appetite dictated what they should do, and they were not solicitous about the justice, but only about the convenience and utility of their actions. The whole of the political history of ancient Egypt is a scene of slaughter and injustice. The cruelty and other crimes of Semiramis excite our indignation, and the mad exploits of Alexander, were they not so much marked with blood, would almost excite our laughter. The heroic ages of Greece exhibit little besides rape, murder, and adultery; and the subsequent periods are full of tyranny, proscription, and oppression.

THE

CHAP.
XIII.

THE Romans were at first a set of lawless banditti; after they had formed themselves into a community, and peopled Rome, they became famous for moderation and justice, if the interest of the republic was not concerned; at last, they turned the most venal and profligate of mankind. When the Roman empire was destroyed, were the crimes of the people extirpated; or does history paint mankind as meliorated by so great an event? The reverse we are afraid is the case; gloomy superstition now started up, persecution stalked terribly behind her, and drenched Europe in blood. Rome erected a spiritual, where she had lost a temporal authority, and indiscriminately trampled on the rights of heaven and earth. Scarcely was there a nation among us, whose roads were not infested with gangs of lawless assassins, who robbed and murdered the traveller as he went along, and the laws were too feeble to bring these, or even single offenders, to justice. Nor was even a man's own house an asylum, his stronger neighbour often entered it in the night, and bereaved him at once of property and of life. Cruelty reigned triumphant, and sported with human misery and affliction. Tortures were



were prolonged amid a croud of exulting spectators, nor could childhood, nor dotage, nor rank, nor sex, plead exemption. The rich had it always in their power to destroy the poor; and whoever was able to pay four hundred crowns, might, from revenge or wantonness, murder a bishop; for half that sum he might kill a priest, commit a rape, or poison his neighbour. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Greek empire of Constantinople, exhibited a scene hardly to be equalled in the annals of mankind; from the throne to the dunghill, all was stratagem, poison, and assassination; nothing was secure but strength, and even that was no longer so than it continued watchful. Nor was the rest of Europe in a much happier state, the barons forced out their vassals to destroy neighbours who had not offended them, and set at nought the mandate of the monarch who ordered them to remain in peace; nay, they even contemned the power of the church, great as it then was; and her feeble edicts, ordaining that there should be no fighting from thursday till monday at day break, nor in the time of Lent, nor in that of other solemnities, were but little regarded. But what regard could the church


CHAP.
XIII.

expect to be paid to edicts, which she held out in the one hand against crimes, while in the other she held indulgencies for those who should, and remissions for those who had already committed them? Such was the picture of Europe till the beginning of the sixteenth century, when by a variety of causes, which it is not our province to enumerate, manners began to soften, justice to triumph over oppression, and society to assume that order and security in which we now happily behold it.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Influence of Female Society.

WOMAN, the fruitful source of half C H A P.
XIV.
our joys, and perhaps of more than 
half our sorrows, was not intended solely to
propagate and nourish the species, but to
form us for society, to give an elegance to
our manners, a relish to our pleasures, to
sooth our afflictions, and to soften our cares.
Of all the various causes which influence
our conduct, our feelings, and our senti-
ments, none operate so powerfully as the
society of women. If perpetually confined
to their company, they infalliably stamp
upon us effeminacy, and some other of the
signatures of their nature. If constantly
excluded from it, we contract a roughness
of behaviour, and slovenliness of person,
sufficient to point out to us the loss we have
sustained. If we spend a reasonable portion
of our time in the company of women, and
another in the company of our own sex, it
is then only that we imbibe a proper share

CHAP. of the softness of the female, and at the
XIV. same time retain the firmness and constancy
of the male.

Effects of
the com-
pany of
women.

BUT roughness of behaviour and sloven-
liness of person, are not all the disadvantages
which the men feel from the want of female
company, even their gait assumes a more
uncouth appearance, their voice a hoarser
and less musical tone; their sensations be-
come less delicate, their sentiments less reli-
gious, and their passions seem to have more
of the brutal, than those of the rest of their
sex; circumstances which appear but too
conspicuous in sailors, miners, and others,
who either spend the greatest part of their
time altogether without women, or in the
company of such as have lost every female
excellence. Should it be alleged, that these
alterations are owing to the horrid trade of
war, in which sailors are so often engaged,
the same thing should then be observed in
soldiers. Should we have recourse to the
furliness of the winds and waves, against
which they maintain a perpetual combat,
though these may in some measure account
for their behaviour, yet it will appear to an
accurate observer, that the ultimate cause is
only

only to be found in the want of that social intercourse with the other sex, which of all things has the most powerful tendency to soften and humanize the mind.

CHAP.
XIV.

THOUGH men secluded from the company of women, become the most rude and uncultivated of animals, yet women almost entirely secluded from the company of men, in some particular cases, scarcely lose any thing of their softness and delicacy. In nunneries, we often persuade ourselves, that these qualities rather increase; but here we are to consider, that women so placed, are not altogether excluded from the company of men, having frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with them through a grate. And besides, the melancholy reflections on the sweets of society, of friendship, and above all, of love, which they have for ever lost; give them an air of pensive melancholy, which never fails to make the sex appear more lovely, and to raise our pity, a passion which, we may say, when it has beauty for its object, is more than sister to love, and inspires us with the strongest partiality.

Women
lose not
their soft-
ness when
excluded
from the
men.

BUT

CHAP.
XIV.

Contract a
roughness
when con-
stantly
with men.

BUT though women who are shut up by themselves, preserve their native softness and delicacy, yet those of them, who, abandoned by, or despising the company of their own sex, associate only with ours, soon become the roughest and most uncultivated of the human species: A fact which the experience of every one must have abundantly demonstrated to him, and which affords the strongest possible proof of the salutary influence of female society. But in order to shew more particularly the benefits arising from this source, let us take a short view of the state of society among the ancients, and in those countries, where, at present, men and women live almost constantly separated from each other, and where the men seldom or never deign to visit the women but to shew their authority, or to gratify animal appetite.

View of
society in
the early
ages.

WHEN we look back to the more early ages of antiquity, we find but little social intercourse between the two sexes, and, in consequence thereof, we discern that the men were less courteous, and the women less engaging: Vivacity and chearfulness seem hardly to have existed. The men
were



were cruel, gloomy, treacherous, and revengeful; the women, in a lesser degree, shared all these unsocial vices. Many ages elapsed after the times we are speaking of, before women arose into consequence enough to become the companions of an hour devoted to society, as well as of that devoted to love. Even the Babylonians, who appear to have allowed their women more liberty than any of the ancients, seem not to have lived with them in a friendly and familiar manner; but as their intercourse with them was considerably greater than that of the neighbouring nations, they acquired thereby a polish and refinement unknown to any of the people who surrounded them. The manners of both sexes were softer, and better calculated to please. And to cleanliness and dress they paid more attention. Such were the effects of female society on the Babylonians; but they had not carried it far enough to become properly cultivated. The Sybarites, who had carried it by much too far, lost by it all that firmness of body and of mind peculiar to the men, and contracted, if we may be allowed the expression, a more than female effeminacy.

CHAP.
XIV.

WE have already seen what a rude and barbarous people the Greeks were, during the heroic ages: when we trace them downward to those periods in which they became famous for their knowledge of the arts and sciences, we find this rudeness and barbarity softened only a few degrees; it is not therefore arts, sciences, and learning, but the company of the other sex, that forms the manners, and renders the man agreeable. But the company and conversation of that sex, was among the Greeks shamefully neglected; and particularly among the Lacedemonians, who by that neglect were the most rude and uncivilized of all their neighbours. In their more early periods, the Romans were scarcely behind the Greeks in rudeness and barbarity; but they were some time a community without women, and consequently without any thing to soften the ferocity of male nature. The Sabine virgins, whom they had stolen, appear to have infused into them the first ideas of politeness; but it was many ages before this politeness banished the roughness of the warrior, and assumed the refinement of the gentlemen; a revolution of manners, which did not begin to shew itself till about the time when the

Cæsars

Cæsars usurped the empire; and from that time the intercourse between the sexes became so easy, and gallantry grew so much into fashion, that the hardy Roman was at length softened down to the delicate voluptuary.

CHAP.
XIV.

THE same causes existed among the nations contemporary with the Romans, and they produced the same effects. None of the fierce inhabitants of the North had either time or inclination for the company of their women; and on that account they were destitute of elegance and politeness, and equally uncultivated in body and mind. Were we to proceed on our survey, and to trace the manners of our ancestors down to our own times, we would find these manners to have been, for a long succession of ages, rude and uncultivated. Were we to investigate the causes of this, we would find also, that one of the principal of them, was, the want of female society.

IN the middle ages, when chivalry dictated almost every wish, and operated in every action, female influence was at the zenith of its glory and perfection. It was the source

CHAP.
XIV.

of valour, it gave birth to politeness, it awakened pity, it called forth benevolence, it restricted the hand of oppression, and meliorated the human heart. Gui de Cavillon speaking of his mistress, says, "I cannot approach her till I have done some glorious deed that may deserve her notice. Actions should be the messengers of the heart, they are the homage due to beauty, and they only should discover love." "Lady," said Savari, "I have collected Basques and Barbacons, and thanks to my stars, we are five hundred of us who will punctually execute your orders, explain your wishes, give us your commands, our couriers are ready bridled, we will mount them immediately, the cause of beauty admits of no delay. Marsan instructing a young knight how to behave so as to gain the favour of the fair, has these remarkable words: "When your arm is raised, if your lance fail, draw your sword directly, and let heaven and hell resound with the clash; lifeless is the soul which beauty cannot animate, and weak is the arm which cannot fight valiantly to defend it." Such were the notions of these times, and romantic as we may now consider them, they

they called forth every latent excellence in both sexes, and laid the foundation of that politeness and urbanity, which now distinguish Europe from the rest of the world.

C H A P.
XIV.



FROM this slight survey of times past, let us turn our eyes towards the present state of mankind in the East; where jealousy, that tyrant of the soul, has excluded all the joys and comforts of mixed society. There, we shall not only find the men gloomy, suspicious, cowardly, and cruel, but divested of almost all the finer sentiments that arise from friendship and from love. There, we shall find, that roughness and barbarity have settled their empire, and triumph over the human mind: but there, shall we hardly be able to discover the tender parent, or the indulgent husband; there, shall we with difficulty find any of the social virtues, or the sentimental feelings. All these are commonly the offspring of mixed society. And though men may improve their heads in the company of their own sex, we may affirm, that the company and conversation of women is the proper school for the heart. Should any one doubt the truth of this, let him turn over a few volumes of the history

State of
the East-
erns.

CHAP.
XIV.

of any of the nations, where the sexes live excluded from each other, and he will meet with the most ample conviction.

State of
Europe.

WHEN from these unsocial regions, where, by being deprived of the company of the fair, life is deprived of more than half its joys, we turn ourselves to Europe, we easily discover, that in proportion to the time spent in the conversation of their women, the people are polished and refined; and less so, in proportion as they neglect or despise them. The Russians, Poles, and even the Dutch, pay less attention to their females than any of their neighbours, and are of consequence less distinguished for the graces of their persons, and the feelings of their hearts. The Spaniards, when they formerly had not the benefits of female society, were remarkable for their cruelties. At this period, when locks, bars, and duennas are becoming unfashionable, and the men have more easy access to the women, they are fast assuming the culture and humanity of the neighbouring nations. So powerful, in short, is the company and conversation of the fair, in diffusing happiness and hilarity, that even the cloud which hangs on the thoughtful brow

brow of an Englishman, begins in the present age to brighten, by his devoting to the ladies a larger share of time than was formerly done by his ancestors.

CHAP.
XIV.

BUT if we would contemplate the influence of female society in its greatest perfection, we must take a view of the Italians and French; in the last of which, we are constantly presented with tempers so gay and chearful, that we are almost tempted to think them superior to all the ills and accidents of life. Among them only, we find happiness smiling amidst want and poverty, and pleasure and amusement, with all their sportive train, not only attending on the rich and affluent, but on the humble villager, and dancing around the rustic cot. For this fortitude of the French in supporting their spirits through all the adverse circumstances of this world, for their vivacity and chearfulness of temper, various reasons have been assigned, as the lightness of their food, and salubrity of their air; causes to which a great deal may be justly attributed, but which are undoubtedly much assisted in their operations, by the constant mixture of the young and old, and of the two sexes; and
this

CHAP.
XIV.

~ this mixture we presume is one of the principal reasons why the cares and ills of life, sit lighter on the shoulders of that fantastic people, than on those of any other country in the world.

IN all other countries, the men make excursions, and form parties of pleasure, by themselves : The French reckon an excursion dull, and a party of pleasure without relish, unless a mixture of both sexes join to compose it. The French women do not even withdraw from the table after meals ; nor do the men discover that impatience to have them dismissed, which they so often do England, and which is a certain indication, that they either want to debauch themselves with liquor, or indulge in those indecencies of discourse, which the company of women always restrains. It is alleged by those who have no relish for the conversation of the fair sex, that their presence curbs the freedom of speech, and restrains the jollity of mirth ; but if the conversation and the mirth are decent, if the company are capable of relishing any thing but wine, the very reverse is the case ; at least, it is always remarkably so among the

the French. Nor is any thing more natural; for, the fair sex in general being less disturbed by the cares and anxieties of life, are not only themselves more chearful, but more eager to promote mirth and good humour.

CHAP.
XIV.



BUT the advantages of female society are not altogether confined to the circumstances we have now related; they extend themselves much farther, and spread their influence over almost every custom and every action of life. It is to the social intercourse with women, that the men are indebted for all the efforts they make to please and be agreeable; and it is to the ambition of pleasing they owe all their elegance of manners, and perhaps all their acquisitions of mind. It is to the same cause, also, that they frequently owe their sobriety and temperance, and consequently their health; for to drunkenness and irregularity nothing is so effectual a check, as the company of modest women; insomuch that he must be lost to shame indeed, who will dare to violate the deference due to them, by debauching himself in their presence. To them we are not less frequently indebted for the calming of violent disputes, and preventing of quarrels, which
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Advanta-
ges of
female
society.

CHAP.
XIV

are happily reckoned so indecent in their presence, that we often postpone them till another opportunity; and in the interim, reason resumes the rein which passion had usurped. But this is not all: many disputes and quarrels, already begun, have been amicably settled by the interposition of their good offices, or, at least, the fatal effects of them prevented by their tears and mediation. Fond of the softer scenes of peace, they have often had the address to prevent, by their arguments and intercession, the direful effects of war; and, afraid of losing their husbands and relations, they have sometimes rushed between two hostile armies, and turned the horrid scenes of slaughter into those of friendship and festivity.

IN our sex, there is a kind of constitutional or masculine pride, which hinders us from yielding, in points of knowledge or of honour, to each other. Though this may be designed by nature for several useful purposes, yet it is often the source also of a variety of evils, the most dangerous to the peace of society. But we lay it entirely aside in our connections with women, and with pleasure submit to such behaviour from
their

from their sex, as from our own would call up every irascible particle of our blood, and inflame every ungovernable passion. This accustomed submission gives a new and less imperious turn to our ideas, teaches us to obey where we were used to command; to consider as only good-breeding and complaisance, that which before we looked upon as the most abject and unbecoming meanness: and thus the stern severity of the male is softened and rendered agreeable by the gentleness peculiar to the female. The tenderness we have for the sex softens the ruggedness of our nature; and the virtues we assume, in order to make a better figure in their eyes, sometimes become so habitual to us, that we never afterward lay them aside.

We are aware, that in this country it is too much the fashion to suppose that books, and the company of men only, are necessary to furnish every qualification requisite for the scholar and the gentleman; but we would desire such as are of this opinion, to compare the generality of the gentlemen of this country, to those of France and Italy, and they will see, that though we perhaps excel them in deepness of thought and

C H A P.
XIV.



solidity of judgment, we are greatly their inferiors in urbanity, in address, and knowledge of the world: for though books may furnish proper ideas, and experience improve the understanding, it is only the company and acquaintance of the ladies, which can bestow that easiness of address by which the fine gentleman is distinguished from the mere scholar, and man of business. The French and Italians educate their nobility in the drawing-room, at the toilette, and places of public amusement, where they are constantly in the company of women. The English educate theirs at the college, and at Newmarket, where books, grooms, and jockies, are their only companions. The former are often the most fantastical of beings. The latter, the most ignorant, imperious, and surly. Something between these two extremes of education, while it preserved the dignity and firmness of the man, might infuse a proper quantity of the softness and address of the woman.

CLEANLINESS and elegance of person may justly be reckoned among the advantages we derive from female society, for a proof of this, let us look a few centuries backwards,



backwards, to these periods when our ancestors kept but little company with their women, and we shall see that they were hardly ruder in their manners than their persons. Their cloaths were not only slovenly, but also rendered disagreeable by the indecent figures represented on them, and their countenances were disfigured with long beards. As the ladies began to have more influence, beards were mutilated down to mustachoes, though the learned exclaimed against the horrid innovation, as discovering a taste which tended more to gratify the women, than to keep up the dignity of the masculine countenance; and though the church considered the mutilation as little short of apostacy, because Moses and Jesus were always painted with long beards. As the gentlemen found that the ladies had no great relish for mustachoes, which were the relics of a beard, they cut and curled them into various fashions, to render them more agreeable; and at last finding such labour in vain, gave them up altogether. But as those of the three learned professions were supposed to be endowed with, or at least to stand in need of, more wisdom than other people, and as the longest beard had

CHAP.
XIV.

always been deemed to sprout from the wisest chin; to supply this mark of distinction, which they had lost, they contrived to smother up their heads in enormous quantities of frizzled hair, that they might bear the greater resemblance to an owl, the bird sacred to wisdom and Minerva. Such professional wigs, however, were long an object of the ridicule of wits, and the dislike of the women, who, to the honour of their taste and influence, have, in the present age, banished by far the greater part of them.

MAN, secluded from the company of women, is not only a rough and uncultivated, but a dangerous, animal to society; a fact well known to the inhabitants of sea-ports, who have too frequent opportunities of seeing the force of that ungovernable passion, with which sailors returned from a long voyage, commonly dedicate themselves to the worthless women who attend on account of their money. And a fact which also appears evident from the conduct of the men in all countries, where women are kept as the miser does his gold. In such countries, the passions of the men are so raised by partial glances, by brooding over the thoughts
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of ideal beauty, and ideal happiness, in the enjoyment of it, and so inflamed with almost insurmountable obstacles to that enjoyment, that if they ever happen to find a woman alone, they attack her in the most licentious manner; nor have their women such a power of resistance as they have in countries where they are accustomed to the company of the men; because the romantic ideas they entertain of the happiness they would derive from them, disarm their virtue, and make them fall an easy prey to the first rude invader. From this cause it happens, that, in spite of cautious parents, and jealous husbands, of locks, bars, and eunuchs, the chastity of the women is less secure in such countries, than where the sexes live free and easy together. We may therefore assert, that the benefits of mixed society are not confined to the men alone, but extend to the women also; infuse into their minds a power of checking the attacks of insolence, and by making man the object of their daily converse, make him less valuable, and consequently less dangerous; and we may further aver, that this society teaches the men to regulate and govern their passions with greater propriety, as nothing can be more certain, than that rape, adultery,

CHAP.
XIV.

C H A P.
XIV. adultery, and every evil that follow them,
are more common in countries where the
sexes live separate, than where they enjoy
the company of each other.

THERE is nothing by which the happiness of individuals and of society is so much promoted, as by constant efforts to please; and these efforts are in a great measure only produced by the company of women. For men, by themselves, relax in almost every particular of good-breeding and complaisance, and appear the creatures of mere nature; but no sooner does a woman appear, than the scene is changed, and they become emulous to show all their good qualities. Women when by themselves, likewise relax in all the arts of pleasing, take less care of their dress, and of their persons, but if a man is introduced, they are assiduous to engage his attention by every art that can give a lustre to their persons, and a gracefulness to their manners. A few centuries ago, women were rarely accessible, but, shut up in houses and castles, lived retired from the bustle of the world. When they deigned to shew themselves, they were approached as divinities; their smiles conferred a happiness,



ness, and raised an enthusiastic ardour, of which at this period we can hardly form any idea. By degrees, as manners became more free, and the sexes mixed together with less ceremony, women began to be seen with less trepidation, approached with less deference, and sunk in their value as they became objects of greater familiarity. Nor was this peculiar to the times we are delineating: the same effect always has, and always will happen from the same cause. Let the other sex, therefore, learn this instructive lesson from it, that half the esteem and veneration we shew them, is owing to their modesty and reserve, and that a contrary conduct may make the most enchanting goddesses degenerate in our eyes to a mere woman, with all the frailties of mortality about her. The forward beauty, whose face is known in every walk, and in every public place, may be given as a toast, and have her name inscribed on the windows of a tavern, but she rarely ever becomes an object of esteem, or is solicited to be a companion for life.

WE shall conclude what we had to say on the advantages of female society, by observing, that it seems not only to be the cause
of

CHAP.
XIV.




of the rise and progress of polite manners, and of sentimental feeling, but also of the fine arts. When we view the countries where women are confined, we find the inhabitants of them distinguished for want of invention and barbarity of manners; when we view the same countries in periods when the women begin to have their liberty, we immediately perceive invention arising, and manners beginning to improve. In no country can this be more strongly exemplified than in Spain; they had formerly less communication with the fair sex than any other people of Europe, and were consequently greatly behind all of them in politeness, elegance and arts; but since their women have been under less restraint, the progress of all these have been so rapid, that they are now almost on an equal footing with their neighbours.

Disadvantages of female society.

WERE we inclined to write the panegyric, instead of the history of the fair sex, we might enumerate several other advantages arising from their company and conversation; but, contenting ourselves with what we have already related on this subject, we proceed to mention some of the disadvantages arising from


From the same source. By the learned and studious, it has often been objected to female company, that it enervates the mind, and gives it such a turn for trifling, levity, and dissipation, as renders it altogether unfit for that application which is necessary in order to become eminent in any of the sciences. In proof of this they allege, that the greatest philosophers seldom or never were men who enjoyed, or were fit for the company or conversation of women. Sir Isaac Newton hardly ever conversed with any of the sex. Bacon, Boyle, Des Cartes, and a variety of others, conspicuous for their learning and application, were but indifferent companions to the fair. Whether these, and many more instances of the same nature which might be adduced, are sufficient to establish a general rule, we pretend not to determine. Nothing however seems more certain, than that the youth who devotes his whole time and attention to female conversation and the little offices of gallantry, never distinguishes himself in the literary world; but without the fatigue and application of severe study, he often obtains by female interest, what is denied to the merited improvements acquired by the labour of many years.

CHAP.
XIV.

 BUT besides this idleness and neglect of study, so much complained of as a consequence of the company of women, such company also often leads the men into a love of finery, and a scene of expensive amusements, which they are not able to afford; while regardless of every thing but to please the giddy and unthinking fair, they rush forward with thoughtless unconcern on the ruin of their fortunes, and awake not from their dream of folly till they find themselves plunged into poverty, become the jest of their acquaintances, and even perhaps sneered at by the very females who led them into the snare. Against such weakness we sincerely wish to caution the young and unexperienced part of our sex, and we advise them to be careful how they associate with any of the other, who are not endowed with sense as well as virtue; for it is not always to vicious, but frequently to gay and thoughtless women, that men owe their ruin.

SUCH as are enthusiastically zealous for the liberties of mankind, have imagined that the only way to continue a brave, free, and independent people, is to avoid as much

as

as possible the company of women, the soft CHAP.
XIV.
 strains of music, and all the luxuries of the 
 table and of dress; and as a proof of their
 opinion, they tell us, that the Lydians, the
 Sybarites, and even the hardy Romans
 themselves, were debauched, and at length
 lost their liberty by their attention to
 women,

THAT all these people were greatly de-
 bauched in their manners, history has left
 us no room to doubt; but that the company
 of women was the cause of this debauchery,
 is far from being certain; at least if we take
 a view of the world as it exists in the pre-
 sent period, it teaches us a different lesson.
 It points out to us, in the most clear and
 distinct manner, that liberty and indepen-
 dence, the most inestimable blessings of man-
 kind, are no where at so low an ebb, as in
 the countries where the women have no
 political influence, and where the men keep
 almost no company with them. It shews us,
 that the men of such countries, instead of
 being the bravest and most independent, are
 the most dastardly and enslaved of the hu-
 man race; and that on the contrary, in the
 wilds of America, where liberty and inde-
 pendence

CHAP.
XIV.

pendence exist in the most extensive sense of the words, the freedom which the women enjoy in mixing with, and in some places even of governing along with the men, has not in the least contributed to destroy these native rights of mankind. And it demonstrates that in Europe, where liberty is generally founded on social and rational principles, calculated for the good of the community, the company of the women has not hitherto so enervated the men, as to induce them to part with it, rather than rouse themselves from the lap of indolence and ease.

ABOUT three hundred years ago, when Francis the First had not introduced women to court, the French were not half so much in the company of their women as at present, and yet were not then a more free and independent people; on the contrary, though we suppose them to have been sinking in effeminacy ever since that period, we have seen them at different times make such efforts against arbitrary power, as have rather increased than diminished their privileges. Were the Italians less slaves to their princes, and to the see of Rome in former times,

times, when they were scarcely employed CHAP. XIV.
 in any thing but acts of superstitious devo-
 tion, than at present, when they almost
 entirely resign themselves to music and to
 women? Or were the Spaniards more free
 under the gloomy reign of Philip the Second,
 when, from motives of jealousy and religion,
 their women were constantly locked up, than
 they are at present when they begin to mix
 with the men? In short, wherever we meet
 with a nation of slaves, other causes besides
 the company of their women, must have con-
 tributed to bring them into that despicable
 state.

SUCH are the general influences of female
 society; the particular influence of an agree-
 able woman, with a tolerable share of good
 sense, we cannot pretend minutely to de-
 scribe. When we consider the two sexes
 into which the human genus is divided, it
 appears in the most conspicuous manner,
 that the Author of nature has placed the
 balance of power on the side of the male,
 by giving him a body more large and robust,
 and a mind endowed with greater resolution.
 But are these qualities altogether without
 their counterpoise? Are women left without
 any

Influence
 of parti-
 cular wo-
 men.

CHAP.
XIV.

any thing on their side to balance such advantages? Have they no powers to exert, whereby they can reduce this seeming superiority to a more equal footing? If they have not, they may justly complain of the partiality of nature, and the severity of their lot. But the Author of our being is no such partial parent: to each sex he has given its different qualifications; and these, upon the whole, when properly cultivated and exerted, put men and women nearly on a level with each other, and share the advantages and disadvantages of life impartially between them. To bend the haughty stubbornness of man, he has given to woman beauty, and to that beauty added, an inexpressible softness and persuasive force, which but few of the sex themselves know the extent of, and which still fewer of ours have the power of resisting. This power of the women, in bending the stronger sex to their will, is no doubt greatly augmented when they have youth and beauty on their side; but even with the loss of these it is not always extinguished; nor does it altogether consist in words and actions, it often effects its purposes by means less visible, and impossible to be described; but these means must

must constantly have for their basis softness and good-nature; they must ever be such as throw a veil over the pride of our supposed superiority, and make us believe, that we are exerting that sovereign power, which we consider as our right, when in reality we are obeying it. The least appearance of the contrary alarms our pride; and she who discovers to us her intention to govern by her power, or by her haughty temper, produces an effect which the other sex are not sufficiently aware of; she raises a disgust, which all our efforts can never conquer. In short, such a conduct in a woman, is the same thing as it would be in a lion to fight with his hinder legs, or for a hare to face about, and defy the teeth of the pursuing pack; it is neglecting to make use of what nature has furnished, and endeavouring to use what she thought proper to deny.

WE could point out here, were it necessary, a great variety of instances, where women have governed men by the influence of good-nature and insinuating manners; but we defy history to furnish one single instance of this ascendancy having ever been obtained over a man of sense, by brawling, ill-

CHAP.
XIV.



ill-humour, and a visible contest for superiority. No man of feeling is proof against the softer arts of a sensible woman. Such arts are armed with an irresistible power. Almost every man is proof against her open attacks; they are the attacks of a bee without a sting.

AMONG the women who have distinguished themselves for governing by the arts of insinuation and persuasion, the Empress Livia stands in the first rank; by these arts she attained such an influence over her husband Augustus, that there was hardly any thing he could refuse her. Many of the married ladies of Rome, who took notice of this ascendancy, were anxious to know how she had acquired it, one of them at last venturing to ask her, she replied, "By being obedient to all his commands; " by not endeavouring to discover his secrets; and by concealing my knowledge " of his amours." Henry the Fourth of France, one of the greatest and most amiable of princes, affords a most remarkable instance of the power women may acquire over men by soothing and insinuation. Tender and compassionate in his nature,
he

he could hardly refuse any thing to softness, intreaties, and tears: sensible at the same time, and jealous of his honour and power, there was hardly any thing he would grant, that was attempted to be forced from him by different methods. Hence he was constantly governed by his mistresses, and at variance with his wives.

From scripture, and from education, almost every man has imbibed an idea of the superiority of his own sex; he is therefore zealous to maintain that superiority, and jealous of every attack made upon it; but he is at the same time endowed with a sentimental tenderness for the other sex, and a strong inclination to promote their happiness. This inclination leads him into so many difficulties, that it may justly be called his weak side, and women of sense easily discover, and as easily take the advantage of it. From this view of the state of the sexes, nothing seems more plain, than that though men govern by law, women may almost always govern by the arts of gentleness and persuasion. “The empire of woman (says a French author) is an empire of sweetness, address, and complaisance;

CHAP.
XIV.

“fance; her commands are careffes; her
“menaces are tears;” and we may add,
that the power of fuch commands and of
fuch menances, is like that of faith, *it can
remove mountains*. It is a power which has
nature on its fide. The principle by her
implanted within us, pleads in favour of the
fex, and more than half performs the task
of making us obey all the commands they
lay upon us. But though men of fenfibility
and good-nature may infalliably be governed
by foftnefs and address, there are others caft
in a rougher mould, whose hearts are ftran-
gers to the finer fenfations, and whose ftub-
born feelings bend not even to prayers and
intreaties. Women joined to fuch may fit
down in filence and deplore their misfor-
tune; a misfortune, which it is beyond their
power to remedy; for we have but too good
reason to affirm, that the temper, upon which
gentlenefs and good-nature are loft, can
never be mended by ill-nature. Men of
fenfe will often, for the fake of peace, sub-
mit to be ill-treated by a woman; men defti-
tute of fenfe will retort that treatment with
double violence.

CHAP.

C H A P. XV.

Sketches of Ceremonies and Customs, for the most part observed only by Women.

AS the manners and customs of a nation, C H A P.
XV.
~~~~~ besides being the most entertaining part of its history, serve also to characterise and distinguish it from all others, by pointing out the various pursuits to which the genius of its people are directed; the whims and caprices which climate, chance, or situation have introduced; the force that the intellectual powers have exerted, in contriving or adopting ceremonies and customs agreeable to reason; in resisting superstition, and discarding whatever is ridiculous in manners, unbecoming in religion, or tyrannical in government; so the customs peculiar to women, did history enable us to give a particular detail of them, on comparing them with those of the men, would greatly assist in forming a judgment of the comparative merit of the two sexes, in discovering the solid and the flimsy of each, and pointing out which is most directed, in its various

T t t 2

pursuits

CHAP.  
XV.

puruits and pleasures, by reason; and which most follows the dictates of custom; or suggestions of fancy.

Obscurity  
of this  
subject.

BUT, unhappily, of all other parts of the female history, that of their manners and customs is involved in the greatest obscurity. Almost all the writers of antiquity have either passed over them in silence, or blended them so intimately with the ceremonies and customs of the men, that we are generally at a loss to discover, with any degree of certainty, what is peculiar to each. Nor is the subject much better elucidated by the moderns, who, in their voyages and travels, for the most part, only inform us of the dress, complexion, and behaviour of the women in the countries they have visited; which, indeed, is commonly all that is in their power; for their ignorance of the language of the people they are describing, precludes them from every species of information, but what they receive by their eyes; the jealousy of the men, in many places, hinders strangers from all access to their women; and the short stay they make affords not the necessary time for information,

It

It has been observed by all who attentively considered human nature, that fashion and custom usurp the most extensive authority over weak and little minds, because such, are not properly qualified to examine the causes from which they arise, nor the effects of which they are productive; or because, after having examined and found them ridiculous, they have not fortitude enough to prefer singularity to custom, though the former be founded on reason, and the latter on folly or caprice. As women in all ages have been supposed to be more the slaves of fashion, ceremony, and custom, than men, this slavery has constantly been made use of to prove the weakness and inferiority of their understandings. We allow, indeed, that if the fact were established, the proof would be undeniable: but we think it is far from being established; for we challenge any man of sense and impartiality to look around him into the fashions and customs of Europe, and to say whether those of our sex are not as whimsical and ridiculous as those of the other, and whether our whole deportment does not declare, that we are as inviolably attached to them.

CHAP.  
XV.

~~~~~  
Both sexes
equally
subject to
the power
of custom.

As

CHAP.
XV.



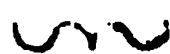
As female ceremonies and customs are of the most delicate nature, and require to be touched by the softest pencil, they may on that account have been the more generally passed over in silence; and on that account, also, we find ourselves obliged to run over them more slightly than is consistent with the nature of historical information. But we lay it down as a rule, that we would rather stop something short of the information we could give, than offend the most delicate ear.

Bewailing
of virgi-
nity.

ONE of the earliest ceremonies peculiar to the sex, which we meet with in history, is the bewailing of virginity. This was practised among the Israelites, Phœnicians, and several of the neighbouring nations, by all women who were obliged to relinquish life before they had entered into the state of wedlock; or who, by any particular vow being devoted to perpetual celibacy, were, in consequence of that vow, cut off from all hopes of enjoying the sweets of love, or of raising up posterity. These last not only continued through life, at stated times, to deplore the unhappiness of their fate, but, on some occasions, assembled their
female

female friends and relations, to assist them in performing the mournful ceremony. It is supposed, that the reason why the Israelitish virgins bewailed their virginity, was, because every woman flattered herself with the hope of being mother to the Messiah that was to come. Among the neighbouring nations, the custom must have originated from some other cause; but what that was, it is impossible for us now to discover. We can only conjecture, that as a numerous posterity was reckoned, among the ancients, one of the greatest blessings, and a particular mark of the divine favour, she who was excluded from a possibility of this blessing, and of this distinguishing favour, might on these accounts suppose herself peculiarly wretched.

C H A P.
XV.



BESIDES this ceremony of bewailing virginity, there is another, perhaps not less ancient, which was likewise practised by the women of Israel, of Phœnicia, of Greece, and some other nations: this was the annual lamentation for the death of Adonis, or, as the scripture calls him, Thammuz, performed by the Phœnician women, on the banks

Ceremony
of mourn-
ing for
the death
of Ado-
nis.

CHAP. banks of the river Adonis, and by those of
XV. other nations, in their cities and houses.

So widely do the writers of antiquity differ in their accounts of Adonis, that it is difficult to say who he was ; all that seems certain concerning him is, that he was a paramour of Venus, that by some fatal accident he came to an untimely end, and that Venus, to commemorate his fate, instituted an annual mourning for him among the women.

THERE is in Phoenicia a river called by the name of Adonis, it runs through a bed of red earth, and being annually overflowed by the melting of the snow on the mountains, washes down a quantity of this earth, which tinges its water of a bloody colour. Superstition supposed that this colour was owing to the blood of Adonis, and that it was a signal for the women to assemble upon its banks, and call to remembrance the tragical exit he was supposed to have made there. As soon as they met together they began their lamentations. These ended, they disciplined themselves with whips, then offered a sacrifice. On the

the day following, pretending that Adonis was arisen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, they shouted for joy, shaved their heads, and obliged all who would not imitate them, to suffer prostitution in the temple of Venus.

CHAP.
XV.



THESE mysteries were also celebrated by the Egyptian, by the Israelitish, and by the Greek women. In Greece all the cities put themselves in mourning, coffins were exposed at every door, the statues of Venus and Adonis were carried in procession, with all the pomp and ceremony practised at funerals, the women tore their hair, beat their breasts, and counterfeited all the actions and gestures usual in lamenting the dead. Along with the procession were carried shells filled with earth, in which were raised several sorts of herbs, especially lettuces, in memory of Adonis being laid out by Venus upon a bed of lettuces. After this a sacrifice was offered, and the following day spent in expressing their joy, that Proserpine, at the solicitation of Venus, had consented to allow Adonis to return from the shades to the regions above.

CHAP.
XV.



CEREMONIES and customs, even though they are of a religious nature, like all other things, are frequently obliterated by devouring time; such, however, is not the fate of that we have been now describing. It is said that it still exists in some places of the Levant, with little variation from the manner in which it was practised by the ancient Greeks.

Good
goddess
worship-
ped only
by wo-
men.

THOUGH deities, whether supposed to be of the masculine or feminine gender, were generally worshipped indiscriminately by both sexes; yet to this rule there were some few exceptions. Among the Syrians there was a female deity called the great Syrian goddess, who seems chiefly to have been worshipped by frantic women, and eunuch priests. In spite of every pretension to the contrary, we must all be sometimes sensible of a natural partiality to our own sex, and feel ourselves prone to excuse its faults and pity its infirmities, as incidents to which we ourselves are more liable. Among people therefore, who suppose that their deities, like themselves, are of different sexes, it will be impossible not to suppose them also susceptible of the different propensities and feelings

feelings of those sexes. Hence nothing could be more natural than for women to address themselves to, and imagine they would be more readily heard by, a female deity than a male. And hence arose among that sex, the peculiar worship and adoration they paid to some of the goddesses. Juno, otherwise called Lucina, who had herself felt the pains of child-bearing, and was on that account supposed to be more susceptible of feeling for those in a like condition, was constituted the patroness of lying-in women, and by them constantly invoked to procure a safe and easy delivery. Vesta, because she had always retained her virginity, was on that account supposed to be a proper patroness for chastity, and therefore worshipped in a temple at Rome, and in some other countries by virgins only. But of all the kinds of adoration paid by women to a female deity, that of the Roman ladies to the good goddess, seems the most unaccountable and extraordinary, as we are totally unacquainted with its origin, its tendency, and the manner in which it was conducted.

CH. A. P.
XV.

CHAP.
XV.



As early as the birth of the Roman republic, it had been customary for the women, at the expiration of every consular year, to celebrate, in the house of the consul or prætor, certain religious rites and ceremonies in honour of the good goddesses; but what these ceremonies were we can give no account, as no man was ever allowed to be present at them, and no man was ever made acquainted with their nature and tendency. All we can say is, that when the time appointed for celebrating these rites came, the Vestal virgins repaired to the house appointed for that purpose, and offered sacrifices to the good goddesses; but the sacrifices offered, and the manner of offering them, were secrets which to this day remain impenetrable, and strongly contradict the common opinion, that no secret is safe in the breast of a woman,

OUR own times furnish us with an instance of a ceremony from which all women are carefully excluded*; but the Roman ladies, in performing the rites sacred to the good goddesses, were even more afraid of the men

* Masquary.

than

than our masons are of women; for we are told by some authors, that so cautious were they of concealment, that even the statues and pictures of men and other male animals were covered with a thick veil. The house of the consul, though commonly so large that they might have been perfectly secured against all intrusion in some remote apartment of it, was obliged to be evacuated by all male animals, and even the consul himself was not suffered to remain in it. Before they began their ceremonies, every corner and lurking-place in the house was carefully searched, and no caution omitted to prevent all possibility of being discovered by impertinent curiosity, or disturbed by presumptive intrusion. But these cautions were not all the guard that was placed around them; the laws of the Romans made it death for any man to be present at their solemnity.

SUCH being the precautions for insuring the secrecy of this ceremony, it was only once attempted to be violated, though it existed from the foundation of the Roman empire till the introduction of christianity; and even this attempt was made, not so much perhaps with a view to be present at the


CHAP.
XV.



The worshippers intruded upon by Clodius.

CHAP.
XV.

the ceremony, as to fulfil an assignation with a mistress. Pompeia, the wife of Cæsar, having been suspected of a criminal correspondence with Clodius, and so closely watched that she could find no opportunity of gratifying her passion. At last, by the means of a female slave, settled an assignation with him at the celebration of the rites of the good goddess. Clodius was directed to come in the habit of a singing-girl, a character he could easily personate, being young and of a fair complexion. As soon as the slave saw him enter, she ran to inform her mistress. The mistress, eager to meet her lover, immediately left the company, and threw herself into his arms, but could not be prevailed upon to return to it so soon as he thought necessary for their mutual safety; upon which he tore himself from her, and began to take a walk through the rooms, always avoiding the light as much as possible. While he was thus walking by himself, a maid-servant accosted him, and desired him to sing. He took no notice of her, but she followed and urged him so closely, that at last he was obliged to speak. His voice immediately betrayed his sex. The maid shrieked, and running into the room where

where the rites were performing, told that a CHAP.
XV.
man was in the house. The women, in the  utmost consternation, threw a veil over the mysteries, ordered the doors to be secured, and with lights in their hands, ran about the house searching for the sacrilegious intruder. They found him in the apartment of the slave who had admitted him, drove him out with ignominy, and, though it was the middle of the night, immediately dispersed, to give an account to their husbands of what had happened. Clodius was soon after accused of having profaned the holy rites; but the populace declared in his favour, and the judges, fearing an insurrection, were obliged to acquit him.

IN a country where the women were less regarded than at Rome, and where less confidence was reposed in their probity and honour, the men would probably have supposed, that ceremonies so carefully concealed from their knowledge, were either inimical to virtue or to the state. But that no such suspicions were entertained by the Romans, we learn from Cicero, who, speaking of these mysteries, says, “What sacrifice is there so ancient, as that which has been
“ handed

CHAP.
XV.

“ handed down to us from our first kings,
“ and is coeval with Rome herself? What
“ sacrifice is there so private and secret, as
“ that which is concealed, not only from the
“ eyes of the curious and inquisitive, but
“ from the sight of all men, and where
“ neither the most profligate wickedness nor
“ impudence ever yet presumed to enter?
“ This sacrifice no man except Clodius was
“ ever so impious as to violate; no man but
“ Clodius ever thought, without the utmost
“ horror, of assisting at it. This sacrifice,
“ which is performed by the Vestal virgins,
“ which is performed for the prosperity of
“ the Roman people, which is performed in
“ the house of the chief magistrate, celebra-
“ ted with unknown ceremonies, and in ho-
“ nour of a goddess, whose very name to
“ know is sacrilege; this sacrifice Clodius
“ prophaned.”

In subsequent periods, it has been alleged by some, that whatever opinion the Romans themselves entertained of the rites and ceremonies performed in honour of this good goddess, they must have been at least of an indelicate nature; else why all this care and solicitude of the women to conceal them from

from the men? But we think it is more natural, as well as charitable, to suppose, that as the Romans had a deity to preside almost over every particular circumstance and action, this good goddess must either have been considered as the patroness of the sex in general, or the particular patroness of some of their affairs and concerns; and that on this account the women imagined nothing could be so acceptable to her, as rites and ceremonies performed only by that sex, and for the prosperity of those affairs which she patronised.

In the religion of the modern Jews, there are some ceremonies peculiar to their women. At the commencement of their sabbath, which is on the Friday evening at half an hour before the sun sets, every conscientious Jew must have a lamp lighted in his house, even though he should borrow the oil of his neighbour. The lighting of these lamps is a kind of religious rite, invariably assigned to the women, in order, say they, to recal to their memory, the crime by which their original mother first extinguished the lamp of righteousness, and to teach them, that they ought to do every thing in their

Ceremonies of
the Jewish
women.

CHAP.
XV.

power to atone for that crime, by rekindling it. Instead of the scape-goat, which this people formerly loaded with their sins, and sent into the wilderness, they now substitute a fowl. Every father of a family takes a white cock, and the mother of the family a white hen, which she strikes upon the head, repeating at every stroke, "Let this hen atone for my sins; she shall die, but I shall live." This done, she twists her neck, and cuts her throat, to signify, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. If a woman, however, happens to be pregnant at the time of this ceremony, as she cannot ascertain whether the infant is a male or a female, that its sins, of whatever gender it be, may not be unexpiated, she takes both a hen and a cock, that she may be assured of having performed the ceremony as required by their law.

Ceremo-
nies in
mourning
peculiar
to women

WHEREVER politeness has stamped a real value upon beauty, there is hardly any circumstance powerful enough to induce the fair sex to injure, or even for a time to impair the lustre of it; but where this natural advantage scarcely entitles the possessor to any superior attention or regard, it is, of
... .. conse-

consequence' cultivated with less assiduity, and preserved with less solicitude. Women, in the politer countries of Europe, even when obliged to dress themselves in the weeds of sorrow and affliction, never lose sight of the idea of appearing lovely; and usually contrive matters so, as that even their weeds may add something to their charms, by giving them a languishing and melancholy air; circumstances which often render beauty more irresistible, than when it is arrayed in all the tinsel glare of show, and frippery of fashion. In the rude ages of antiquity, women on the death of relations, seem to have forgot every idea of beauty, and every sense of pain; those of modern nations, into whose plan of life elegance and politeness have not yet entered, in the melancholy moments dedicated to mourning, regardless of every thing but the custom of their country, or rather, perhaps, of the impulses of their heart, not only eclipse the present lustre of their charms, but, by the wounds and slashes which they make upon their bodies, cruelly deface them for ever.

It was throughout all antiquity a prevailing opinion, that no offended deity would

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grant

CHAP.
XV.

Origin of
women
wounding
them-
selves in
mourning

would grant forgiveness without blood; hence almost every people upon earth stained the altars of their gods with the blood of human or of more ignoble victims. But blood was not only necessary to appease a god when offended, it was also the most effectual means of rendering him propitious, and procuring from him any favour. And hence, almost in every nation, those who approached a deity to ask any particular favour of him, mangled and tore their own flesh, as the surest method of obtaining their request. Nor was it their deities alone, which the ancients supposed were delighted with blood; the ghosts, also, of their deceased relations approaching in their separate state nearer to the nature of these deities, likewise resembled them in this particular. It is therefore not improbable, that the custom of wounding and tearing the flesh in mourning, was first introduced to appease the ghosts of deceased friends; to supplicate them for some particular favour; to shew them how much they were loved and lamented by those whom they had left behind them on earth; or to feast them with human blood, upon which they were supposed by the Greeks and some of the neighbouring nations

tions, to regale themselves with a peculiar pleasure. But from whatever cause this custom proceeded, we are well assured that the women of Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, and perhaps of many other nations, mangled and disfigured themselves by wounds, on the death of their friends and relations,

CHAP.
XV.

BUT this custom was not peculiar to antiquity ; it has been handed down even to our times. In Otaheite, and several of the other islands around it, the women, either in compliance with the custom of their country, or rather perhaps, when the idea of some departed friend stole into their memory, though in the height of a fit of mirth and jollity, immediately assumed the appearance of the deepest sorrow, wounded their heads with the tooth of a shark, till the blood ran down their faces ; and as soon as the ceremony was ended, or perhaps the idea of the departed friend driven out by another of a more pleasureable nature, the transition from sorrow to joy was as instantaneous as it had before been from joy to sorrow.

THIS

CHAP.
XV.

THIS ceremony, however, of our modern savages, although cruel in its nature, is only of a short duration, and gives but little interruption to the more cheerful sensations. But the mourning of the Grecian women was long, and, while it lasted, struck out of existence every thing that could be called joyous or amusing. They not only beat their breasts, and tore their faces with their nails, but also divested themselves of all their ornaments, laid aside their jewels, their gold, and whatever was rich and precious in apparel, sequestered themselves from company, and refused all the comforts and conveniences of life, shunned the light as odious, and courted dark shades and melancholy retirement. They also tore or cut off their hair, and either cast it into the funeral pile, to be consumed along with the body of the person for whom they mourned, or into the tomb, to be buried along with it. Cutting off the hair was not, however, an invariable custom. Some ran about with it dishevelled, clothing themselves in the coarsest garments, throwing dust upon their heads and faces, and even sometimes prostrating themselves upon the earth, and rolling in the dust; customs which seem to have been

been practised from the earliest antiquity, as expressive of the deepest sorrow and affliction. On the death of persons who were distinguished for their valour or merit, not satisfied with cutting off their own hair, the Persians also cut off that of their horses and beasts of burden, that every object around them might call to their memory the loss they had sustained.

CHAP.
XV.

BESIDES the ceremonies already mentioned, the women in ancient times, as directed by fancy or instigated by regard, decked the tombs of their deceased friends, hung lamps upon them, and adorned them with a variety of herbs and flowers; a custom at this time observed by the inhabitants of Constantinople and its neighbourhood, who not only adorn the tombs of their dead, but plant their burying-grounds with rosemary, cypress, and other odoriferous shrubs and flowers; but whether with a view to please the manes of the dead, or preserve the health of the living, is uncertain. There were other ornaments besides these we have now mentioned, used by the women of antiquity to deck the tombs. The Greeks, frequently hung the tomb of a deceased lover

CHAP.
XV.

lover round with locks of the hair of his mistress. They likewise made offerings, and poured out libations to the ghosts, whom they supposed to smell, to eat, and to drink as they did while upon earth. This was not only a prevailing opinion among the ancients, but has not as yet been totally obliterated. Into a small hole left at the head of the grave, the Gaurs thrust victuals and drink for several days, to regale the departed spirit, which is supposed frequently to visit the body from which it has been separated. The Americans carry provisions to the tombs of their dead, for several mornings after they are buried, and sometimes make fires by the graves, that the ghosts may have an opportunity of warming themselves. In the East Indies, a person is no sooner dead than the women assemble and rub his face with rice; and at Narva, one of the principal towns of Livonia, they celebrate a remarkable festival sacred to the manes of the dead. On the eve of Whitsuntide, the women assemble in the church-yard, and spreading napkins on the graves and tombstones, cover them with a variety of dishes of broiled and fried fish, custards, and painted eggs; and to render them more agreeable to the ghosts,

the

the priest, while he is praying over them, perfumes them with frankincense, the women all the time howling and lamenting in the most dismal manner, mean while the more intelligent clerk is not less assiduously employed in defrauding the ghosts, by gathering up all the viands for the use of the priest.

C. H. A. P.
XV.



THERE is not perhaps among mankind, a custom more general than mourning for the dead; nor is there a nation existing in which the women do not, either from custom or the tenderness of their nature, act a principal part in this solemnity. There are however some people, as the ancient Trauses, who instead of reckoning death a subject of lamentation, rejoice at it as a happy deliverance from pain and adversity; and others, who, though they commonly mourn at the death of their friends and relations, rejoice at it when attended with particular circumstances. The Greek and Roman fathers, and, what is more extraordinary, even the mothers, rejoiced when their sons fell in the defence of their country. The Christians, in several periods, rejoiced when their friends, being put to death by persecutors,

Instances
of rejoicing
for
the dead.


CHAP.
XV.



cutors, were numbered among those who were reckoned worthy of the crown of martyrdom. The women of modern Egypt, though on other occasions they lament over the dead with the most dismal outcries, when a Sheick departs this life, demonstrate the most extravagant joy and satisfaction, because, say they, a Sheick must, at death, infalliably enter into the paradise of the blessed.

Sexual ce-
remonies
of women.

BESIDES these ceremonies of religion and of mourning, which the women have appropriated to themselves, there are others observed by them, which, arising from their nature, and the circumstances attending it, may, for that reason, be denominated sexual. In Chiragua, when a girl arrives at a certain age, her female relations inclose her in a hammoc, and suspend it from the roof of her cottage. Having remained in this hammoc for one month, they let it down half way; at the end of another month, the neighbouring women assemble, and having armed themselves with clubs and staves, enter the cottage in a frantic manner, striking furiously upon every thing within it. Having acted this farce for some time, one of them declares that

that she has killed the serpent which had CHAP.
XV.
 stung the girl, upon which she is liberated 
 from her confinement, the women rejoice
 for some time together, and then depart
 every one to her own home. Among some
 of the Tartarian tribes, when a girl arrives
 at the same period of life, they shut her up
 for a few days, and afterward hang a signal
 on the top of her tent, to let the young men
 know that she is become marriageable.
 Among others of these tribes, the parents of
 the girl make a feast on this occasion, and
 having invited their neighbours, and treated
 them with milk and horse flesh, they declare
 that their daughter is become marriageable;
 and that they are ready to dispose of her as
 soon as a proper opportunity shall offer. In
 Circassia and Georgia, where parents are
 sometimes obliged to marry their daughters
 while infants, to prevent their being vio-
 lently taken from them by the rich and
 powerful, the circumstance of a girl being
 arrived at the time of puberty, is frequently
 concealed for some time, as the husband has
 then a right to demand her, and the parents
 perhaps think her too young for the matri-
 monial state.

CHAP.
XV.

In the Brazils, and among some tribes of the Canadians, they oblige the sex, during their periodical purgations, to shut themselves up in little huts built on purpose. These huts are always at some distance from the villages, and the provisions for the women confined there, are daily carried to them with as much care and circumspection, as in Europe we would carry them to a house infected with the plague. The laws of Moses, perhaps, first taught mankind that the touching of certain objects, infected the body with a pollution disagreeable to the Deity; this doctrine has since found its way into many other systems of religion, that of the Brazilians is so strict in this particular, that the men oblige their women to swear by their *Fetiché*, or household god, whom they believe would execute immediate vengeance on them if they swore falsely, that they will never conceal the time of their purgations, nor indeed would it be safe for them to do so, because, if they should then be detected dressing victuals for the men, instant death would immediately be the punishment. In all civilized countries, as soon as a young virgin becomes marriageable, she endeavours to improve the charms of nature by the addition of


of art. In the Brazils they seem to act upon a contrary plan. They burn or cut off the hair of her head, they make incisions on her body from her shoulders to her waist, and they daub these incisions with a corrosive powder, which makes indellible marks on the skin. After one month they repeat these incisions, and rub the girl on the third month with a greasy black ointment, she then begins to appear abroad, being by all these different operations now reckoned a delicious morsel to take to the arms of an adoring lover. In Congo, they have a custom something similar, though much less barbarous. They shave the head of a young woman at the age of puberty, leaving only a small tuft on the foretop. As soon as this operation is performed, it is a signal that she is to be disposed of, and the men may apply accordingly.

AMONG the circumstances which give rise to these customs which we have called sexual, child-bearing is one of the most particular. As in child-bearing some little assistance has generally been necessary in almost all countries; to afford this assistance, the women have commonly employed midwives of

CHAP.
XV.

CHAP.
XV.

of their own sex. The Athenians were the only people of antiquity who did otherwise. They had a law which prohibited women and slaves from practising physic. As midwifery was accounted one of the branches of this art, many lives had been lost, because the women would not submit to be delivered by men. A woman called *Agnodice*, in order to rescue her sex from this difficulty, dressed herself in the habit of a man, and having studied the art of physic, revealed herself to the women, who all agreed to employ no other. Upon this the rest of the physicians, enraged that she should monopolize all the business, arraigned her before the court of Areopagus, as having only obtained the preference to them by corrupting the chastity of the wives whom she delivered. This obliging her to discover her sex, the physicians then prosecuted her for violating the laws of her country. The principal matrons of the city, now finding her in such danger, assembled together, came into the court, and petitioned the judges in her favour. The petition of the matrons was so powerful, and the reasons which they urged for having employed her, so conducive to the preservation of female delicacy, that a law

law was made, allowing women to practise C H A P.
XV.
midwifery. The sex availed themselves of 
this law, and the assistance of the men soon
became unfashionable.

AMONG the Romans, and the Arabians, who after them cultivated the science of medicine with great assiduity, the women, in cases of difficulty, sometimes submitted to be delivered by a man; but this was far from being a matter of choice or a general practice: nor was it till the latter end of the last century, and beginning of this, when excess of politeness in France and Italy began to eradicate delicacy, that the sex came so much into the mode of being delivered by male practitioners; a mode which strongly indicates the decline of delicacy, and which, in the opinion of many, is likely to destroy chastity also.

THE Greek and Roman women imagined that the palm-tree possessed a power of easing the pain of child-bearing; they therefore when seized with it, grasped palm branches in their hands, and devoutly supplicated the goddess Lucina. The ancient Germans, destitute of more rational methods, placed
all

CHAP.
XV.

all their hopes in magical girdles, which they tied about their women, and which, according to them, had the virtues of procuring immediate ease, and promoting a speedy delivery. But the power of these girdles did not terminate here, it extended even to the child as well as to the mother; and a son, born by their assistance, was undoubtedly to be brave, and a daughter to be chaste; hence such girdles were carefully kept in the repositories of kings and of other great personages. A few years ago, some of them were to be met with in the families of the chieftains of Scotland. They were marked with many mystical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the women in labour, was accompanied with certain mystical words and gestures; which only some particular women were supposed to understand; a circumstance by which it appears that their pretended utility depended more on ideal magic, than on their intrinsic virtues. Every age and country has its peculiar follies and absurdities; ours has many nostrums to prevent the pain necessarily attending on child-bearing, and they are just as well calculated to perform an impossibility, as the methods we have been now describing.

IN



IN polite countries, where the female feelings are at all times exceedingly acute, and more particularly so at that of child-bearing, we solicitously guard them from every surprise, and from every noise, lest the effects of these, should in moments so critical, prove fatal to their existence. The Canadians proceed upon a plan directly opposite: sensible of the prodigious efforts occasioned by any unexpected event, when a woman is slow in being delivered, and nature seems unable to perform her office, as many neighbours as they can collect together, privily assemble at the door of her cabin, and all at once begin to shout the war hoop. The surprise throws the woman into convulsions, and the consequence generally is, that the child is brought forth in a few minutes. The Canadian women frequently have huts without the village, appropriated to child-bearing, where they are obliged to remain during the time of their purgation, which answers nearly to that instituted by Moses.

IN some climates, where the constitution is relaxed by heat, and at the same time not vitiated by these habits which in politer

CHAP.
XV.



nations destroy mankind, women are said to be delivered with little pain, and frequently without any assistance; nor is this singularity altogether peculiar to warm countries, but seems to depend more on living agreeably to nature, than on climate, or any other circumstance; for we have heard it asserted by several people who have been in Canada, that some of the savage women when they feel the symptoms of labour coming upon them, steal silently into the woods, lay themselves down there, and are delivered alone. Every woman suckles her own child, and during all the time of her doing so, which is commonly two or three years, she never cohabits with her husband.

Ceremo-
nies and
customs
arising
from
marriage.

IN countries where the virtue of the sex is supposed to be secured by the ideas of religion and the sense of moral rectitude, married women are under no particular restraint in the absence of their husbands; but in Hindostan, when the husband is from home, the wife must not appear chearful, must not eat delicate victuals, nor dress herself in fine cloaths, nor sit at the window of her apartment, nor in short do any thing but such as indicates sorrow and subjection. In France
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and Italy, the case is almost in every particular the reverse, and in England the ladies are too fast following the fashionable example. CHAP.
XV.
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IN Poland the women of middling condition are not allowed to marry, till they have wrought with their own hands three basketful of cloaths, which they are obliged to present to the guests who attend them on their wedding-day. In Wallachia, the bride wears a veil on the day before, and on that of her marriage; whoever unveils her is entitled to a kiss; but to prevent too much impertinence, the bride may in return demand a present, and the request must be complied with. The ancient Germans had, and their descendants continue to this day, a ceremony called Morgengabe, or morning-gift, which the husband is obliged to present to the bride on the morning after their marriage, and which becomes her sole and absolute property, and she may dispose of it in her lifetime or at her death. Some traces of a like custom are to be met with among us, but it is here only voluntary; there it is enforced by a law. Formerly among the peasants of Britain, when a bride

CHAP.  
XV.

was brought to the door of the bridegroom's house, a cake was broken over her head, for the fragments of which the attendants scrambled. These fragments were laid under the pillows of the young men and maidens, and supposed to be endowed with a power of making them dream of their future wives and husbands.

IN Adrianople and the neighbouring cities, the women have public baths, which are a part of their religion and of their amusement, and a bride, the first time she appears there after her marriage, is received in a particular manner. The matrons and widows being seated round the room, the virgins immediately put themselves into the original state of Eve. The bride comes to the door richly dressed and adorned with jewels; two of the virgins meet her, and soon put her in the same condition with themselves; then filling some silver pots with perfume, they make a procession round the rooms, singing an epithalamium, in which all the virgins join in chorus; the procession ended, the bride is led up to every matron, who bestows on her some trifling presents, for which she returns thanks, till she  
has

has been led round the whole\*. We could add many more ceremonies arising from marriage, but as they are for the most part such as make a part of the marriage ceremony itself, we shall have occasion to mention them with more propriety afterwards.

CHAP.  
XV.



OF all the passions which subvert reason and deform the mind, jealousy is the most credulously ridiculous, and in order to clear themselves from its suspicions, has subjected the fair sex to some of the most unaccountable expurgatory ceremonies. Such was that of the waters of jealousy of the ancient Jews, and such also was another of a similar nature practised by the Greeks, among whom, when a woman was accused of unchastity, a tablet with the form of an oath, which she was to take, written upon it, was hung about her neck; bearing it in this manner, she went into the water till it reached the calf of her leg, then she stood

Miscellaneous customs and ceremonies.

\* In Phrygia, every bride, before she was married, bathed in the river Scamander, when she used the following words: "Receive, O Scamander! my virginity." Cimon, an Athenian, availing himself of this custom, disguised himself like a river god, and deflowered Callirhoe a noble virgin, upon which that superstitious ceremony was abrogated.

and

CHAP.  
XV.

and solemnly repeated the oath, which, if false, the water, we are told, as if agitated with rage at her perfidy, swelled till it rose over the tablet, that it might cover from the sun the perpetration of so foul a deed; if true, it remained quiet, and the woman was cleared from all suspicion. Might not the ordeal trial, which was used for so many ages, and for the discovery of so many crimes, be a relic of this? But be that as it will, it was not founded upon more rational principles.

To trials of this kind the single as well as the married women were subject; but of the chastity of the latter there were other circumstances, which the Greeks reckoned the most convincing proofs. Pain and difficulty in bringing forth their young, are unavoidable evils, to which the females of all viviparous animals are more or less subject. But it was supposed by this people, that their gods, in commiseration of the case of a woman who was unjustly suspected of infidelity to her husband, wrought a miracle in her favour, by exempting her from these peculiar evils annexed to the lot of female life; and she who brought forth a child without

without a sigh or a groan, and declared that she felt no pain, was in consequence accounted as chaste as Vesta. Hence it is obvious, that it only required a tolerable degree of fortitude in the wife, and a large share of credulity in the husband, to adjust all matrimonial differences of this kind to the satisfaction of both. But this was not the only proof the Greeks had of the conjugal fidelity of their wives: A numerous offspring was among the ancients reckoned one of the greatest of blessings; and to have it increased by two children at a birth, was considered as one of these favours, which the gods only bestow upon superior virtue and chastity. The wife, therefore, who brought forth twins, was by that circumstance fully cleared of every foul aspersions. So little, however, is the consistency among mankind, that this very circumstance, which the Greeks reckoned the strongest proof of the chastity of their wives, is, by the Hottentots reckoned the most infallible proof of the contrary. We have given the reason of the Greeks for their opinion, but that of the Hottentots is rather too indelicate to be related. The women of the Molucca islands reckon twins  
a great

CHAP.  
XV.

~ a great misfortune, and to avoid it they never in their virgin or married state, eat any herb or fruit that grows double.

CARELESS of what is to come, the brute animals enjoy the pleasures of the present hour, and scarcely extend their hopes or their fears any farther. But man grasps at the knowledge of futurity, and vainly endeavours to become acquainted not only with the contingencies that shall happen to him in this life, but in that which shall be hereafter. The more cunning part of the species; observing this avidity, has taken the advantage of it, and imposed upon the credulous by pretensions to magic, astrology, and all the other falsities practised by dealers in the secrets of futurity: to all these dealers, nothing has ever given so much encouragement, as the impatience of the fair sex to become acquainted with what shall happen to them in love and marriage; nor has this impatience been confined to one period, or to one country, it is every where implanted in the female mind, and while in Europe it prompts them to apply for information, to people who are supposed to derive  
their











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